

How do middle class Pakistani young people construct contemporary international conflicts?

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Abstract

This thesis examines how middle class Pakistani young people construct contemporary international conflicts. Little previous research has been conducted in this area, and none in Pakistan. This investigation is of interest because young people like the ones who participated in my research may become future leaders. Therefore, their perceptions and understanding of these issues may influence the way these are addressed in the future.

This thesis draws on literature about the just war tradition – what are the just causes of war or *jus ad bellum* and how ethical warfare must be conducted or *jus in bello*. The theoretical framework used is that of social constructionism, especially drawing on the ideas of Jonathan Potter, Margaret Wetherell, Kenneth Gergen and Michel Foucault. The research involved six focus groups with Pakistani young people aged 17-18 years.

The study found that the participants talked enthusiastically about issues related to international conflicts. They drew on a range of discourses and evidence to construct their arguments, some of which were grounded in not very reliable evidence. They argued that terrorism, whether perpetrated by state or non-state actors, was wrong, and they were highly critical of US policies and actions in the wider world.

These findings are important because Pakistani society faces a serious challenge from militancy and terrorism. The thesis suggests that changes to the content and delivery of school curricula can help young people to develop a more informed and morally active sense of citizenship and world affairs.

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1 Introduction

This thesis investigates how middle class Pakistani young people construct contemporary international conflicts. In order to do this, I examined how they made sense of what was happening in the world around them against the backdrop of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US, and I explored the discourses they drew on to construct their understanding of some aspects of the international conflicts prevailing at the time when the fieldwork for this study was carried out.

This study is important because little research has been conducted anywhere focusing on young people's constructions of international conflicts. Moreover, no comparable study has been done in Pakistan. Since the fateful attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre in 2001, Pakistan became a key player in the so called 'war on terror' initiated and led by the US government. The implications of the 'war on terror' have been momentous for the Pakistani state, polity and people.

The education system in Pakistan is a highly stratified one, comprising three main tiers – state schools, private schools and the madrassas (religious seminaries). Most middle class Pakistani children attend private schools. State schools are mainly attended by working class children. The madrassas predominantly enrol children from poor, rural households in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Punjab provinces. Most private school children go into higher education within Pakistan as well as overseas, including the UK and the USA. Many of these young people, after completing their studies, go into important middle class occupations like the civil service, army, medicine, engineering, banking and business. It would then be reasonable to say that young people attending private schools go on to occupy strategic roles in Pakistani society. Therefore, it is important to understand their perspective on the world conflicts that dominated the first decade of the 21st century and continue to do so at the time of writing of this thesis.

None of the three systems of education prevalent in the country offer young people opportunities to study and discuss contemporary issues in citizenship, politics and history. In both private and state schools, young people take Pakistan Studies as a compulsory subject. The Pakistan Studies curriculum combines elements of geography,

history of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent and the Pakistan Movement. The Pakistan Studies textbooks are either prescribed or approved by the government textbook boards. One of the significant foci of these textbooks (e.g. Khan, 2004; Rabbani, 2009) is the 'two nation theory', which is offered as the *raison d'être* for the creation of Pakistan in 1947. As a result, the textbooks emphasise the Islamic identity of the Pakistani state and its people, present India as the hostile 'other', and extol the country's military. This excessive preoccupation with religious nationalism leaves hardly any curricular space for discussion of citizenship; contemporary political and economic issues confronting the Pakistani state; and its role within regional geopolitics and the wider globalised world. This study aims to investigate young people's constructions of contemporary geopolitics and international conflicts. Given the serious challenges faced by the Pakistani state and society, devising a citizenship curriculum that prepares students, who are expected to take-on important strategic roles in the country, to engage with various national and international challenges appears imperative. Berg, Graeffe and Holden (2003) highlight the importance of the citizenship curriculum in helping children and young people learn about controversial issues; international conflicts, according to the definition that they use, fall within the ambit such issues. It has also been argued that school curricula can play a strategic role in addressing issues of extremism that lead to various forms of violence, including terrorism (Davies, 2005; Durrani and Dunne, 2010). It is envisaged that the findings of this study will provide useful insights for devising an appropriate citizenship curriculum for Pakistani schools.

This study is significant from another perspective. Traditionally, in Pakistan, like many other parts of the world, the notion of child is taken unproblematically as referring to a young human being who is both physically and psychology immature. Consequently, childhood is seen as a state of becoming – a journey towards adulthood. As such, children are conceived as having certain needs, which 'are at the heart of contemporary public concern, part of the everyday vocabulary of countless numbers of social welfare workers and teachers, policy makers and parents' (Woodhead, 1997: 63). To a very significant extent, these 'needs' of the child are met through the curricular provision in schools, conceived and organised by adult professionals whose thinking is guided by 'what is desirable for the child' (Woodhead, 1997: 66). However, there is little, if any, effort made to solicit the views of the children themselves.

Departing from this adult-centric perspective, this study aims to understand some key issues related to international conflicts from the young people's own perspectives. As such, this study subscribes to the belief that 'children's social relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right, and not just in respect to their social construction by adults' (James and Prout, 1997: 4).

The above mentioned commitment of this study to recognise young people's agency and giving them a voice of their own is located within the new sociology of childhood which in turn can be located within the wider perspective of social constructionism in social sciences (James and Prout, 1997). Chapter two of this thesis will discuss and explain some key tenets of social constructionism which form the ontological and epistemological backdrop for this research. While doing so, it will especially focus on the notion of discourse and the way it has been employed in the context of this thesis.

Since this thesis studies middle class, Pakistani young people's constructions of their understanding of international conflicts, it was important to identify and analyse some of the possible key discourses that would have been available to them and which they might have drawn upon while discussing these. Therefore, chapter three focuses on some important discourses related to international conflicts and wars. Arguing from a social constructionist perspective, this chapter eschews any definite, fixed and stable notions and principles underpinning inter-state conflicts and wars. Instead, it presents some key discourses related to the just causes of war or *jus ad bellum* and the just conduct of war or *jus in bello*.

Chapter 4 discusses the research design for this study. The research was carried using the qualitative paradigm. The ontological and epistemological bases of the study are informed by the wider theoretical perspective of social constructionism (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Gergen, 2001, 1999/2009a, 2009b; Burr 1995 and 2003). Rather than aiming to provide generalisable findings that would relate to all young Pakistani people, the study presents insights that are specific to its context – the sites where the research was conducted and the young people who participated in it. Therefore, all conclusions drawn and claims made in this thesis are located and contingent. I recognise that if the research had been carried out in different schools, the outcomes might not have been the same. For example, one of the schools where the fieldwork

was carried out was located in Rawalpindi, close to headquarters of the Pakistan army and it is likely that many of the research participants had close relatives serving in the armed forces. As a result of this, their constructions would have been significantly affected by this close connection with this powerful national institution.

Moreover, my own personal and professional history must also have impacted on the research. I grew up in a middle class Pakistani family, with close connections to the civil service of Pakistan. I have worked throughout my professional career in the education sector across the age range. I worked as the headteacher and principal in schools quite similar to those where the fieldwork for this research was carried out. My early life experiences as well as my academic and professional background played an important role in shaping my world view, which in turn had a significant influence on the choice of my research topic and the way I designed and executed the study and, very importantly, on the way I interpreted the data. I believe that interpretation of data is a creative process and is the result of a complex interaction between the information gathered and the person of the researcher. The data was collected through six focus groups with 17-18 year old young people. These were conducted in four schools within the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi between 2005 and 2008.

The data was analysed using a 'thematic framework' (Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor 2003: 220). Key issues related to the main focus of the research, were identified and used to code the data; they structured the first stage of the analysis. Subsequently, I reviewed the use of various discourses used to discuss contemporary international conflicts, which are set out in chapter three.

Chapter five looks at the participants' constructions of Pakistan – the country where they lived and studied at the time when this research was carried out. This was important because Pakistan formed the central reference point for them for understanding the wider world and various inter-state conflicts. Chapter six then analyses the participants' constructions of the wider world. This chapter gives an insight into the participants' perceptions of the world and the relationships of nation states with each other.

Chapter seven, eight and nine focus on international conflicts discussed by the participants: Pakistan-India hostilities; the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States of America; and the subsequent US led 'war on terror'.

Finally chapter ten summarises the findings, reflects on the research process, and considers implications both for education (for example, the need to develop citizenship curricula for Pakistani schools that would equip students to take up some of the complex challenges in a paradoxically integrated yet polarised world) and for future research.

2 Social Constructionism and Discourse

My research is about middle class Pakistani young people's construction of contemporary international conflicts. I am focussing on 'constructing' rather than 'knowing' because the former represents a dynamic process whereby people actively engage in making sense of the world around them. This is in contrast to knowing something which has a connotation of internalisation of an authentic description of how the world *is*. The theoretical perspective that I have drawn in this study is that of social constructionism (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Shotter, 1993; Gergen, 2001, 1999/2009a, 2009b, 2011; Wetherell, 2001; Burr, 1995, 2003).

In this chapter, I will begin by briefly delineating the somewhat disparate origins and fluid boundaries of social constructionism as a theoretical perspective. After this, I will present my case for using the terms 'constructing' rather than 'knowing' in my research.

Subsequently, I will present a critique of the human subject as traditionally conceived within social sciences, especially psychology and sociology. I will offer an alternative account of the subject drawing on theorists and writers that either classify themselves as social constructionist or whose ideas have been formative for this perspective (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Bakhtin, 1986; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Billig et al., 1988; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Shotter, 1993; Gergen, 2001, 1999/2009a, 2009b, 2011; Wetherell, 2001; Burr, 1995, 2003). After presenting a social constructionist take on the human subject, I will briefly problematize the common-sense, hegemonic conception of human knowledge which is steeped in the Enlightenment worldview (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Shotter, 1993; Gergen, 1999/2009a, 2009b; Burr, 1995, 2003; Zhen, 2010). I offer an alternative perspective that I have referred to as relational epistemology, which speaks of knowledge in terms of socially constructed and *located accounts* or *versions*, instead of 'authentic' representations of 'reality'.

After sketching out an alternative epistemology, I will outline the notion of discourse that has been widely used by writers of a social constructionist orientation. This is followed by an analysis of the idea of discourse as developed by the French

poststructuralist philosopher, Michel Foucault (1970, 1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1966/1989a, 1969/1989b). I will conclude the chapter by engaging with the realism versus relativism debate in the context of social constructionism. I will outline the implications of the critique of relativism, levelled against social constructionism, for curriculum development, pedagogy and social research, especially in the context of my research.

2.1 Origins of Social Constructionism

Social Constructionism is a theoretical perspective, which neither has a clear point of origin nor a sharp boundary that differentiates it from what it is not (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999/2009a). Notwithstanding the relatively fluid origin and somewhat porous boundaries, over the course of past few decades, social constructionism has emerged as a distinct and significant orientation within the social sciences. Its origins can be best located in the unease among some social scientists around the middle of the twentieth century about the way their respective disciplines were organised (Burr, 1995, 2003; Hosking and Morley, 2004). Hosking and Morley (2004: 318) located the origin of the perspective in the so called 'crisis in social psychology'. However, some of the key ideas that got incorporated into the perspective came from beyond the disciplinary boundaries of social sciences. For example, Mikhail Bakhtin whose ideas have influenced social constructionism (Shotter, 1993; Gergen, 2001, 1999/2009a,) was a literary critic and semiotician. Another figure whose ideas have been formative for the perspective is Ludwig Wittgenstein – an Austrian philosopher of language (Potter and Wetherell 1987; Shotter, 1993; Burr, 1995; Gergen, 2001, 1999/2009a).

The term social constructionism was first formally used by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their seminal book *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1966). Berger and Luckmann both were sociologists. Kenneth Gergen, an influential social constructionist writer, trained as a social psychologist. Similarly, John Shotter, Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, who have written extensively on social constructionism, have academic and professional backgrounds in social psychology.

Thus, theorists and writers who have contributed to social constructionism have come from a diverse range of backgrounds. For the purpose of my thesis, I have drawn on a

range of writers some of whom acknowledged themselves as social constructionists and others who did not. However, all of them contributed ideas which have some relevance and affinity with the perspective that is broadly referred to as social constructionism in social sciences. In other words, the ideas that I have drawn on, share what Burr (1995: 2) refers to as a 'family resemblance'. Based on these resemblances and relevance for my study, I have grouped these ideas under the title of social constructionism.

2.2 Constructing Rather than Knowing the World

Traditionally empirical studies have focused on what people know – almost a case of getting into the minds of participants and finding what lies there. However, social constructionism has questioned this tendency in social scientific research and problematized the possibility of 'discovering' what a person might 'know'. Social constructionism posits that when people speak instead of communicating what they know, they actively construct their accounts (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Bakhtin, 1986; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Shotter, 1993; Gergen, 1999/2009a, 2009b; Burr, 1995, 2003). This assertion has significant implications for social research, including mine.

The term 'construct' implies that people actively create and build versions of the world, using linguistic resources available to them. Therefore, any account of a specific event or phenomenon is actually a *version*, implying that there are other, at times competing, accounts of issues at hand (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Whenever people speak to describe another person, group of people, an event or a phenomenon, their speech is never merely descriptive; their 'accounts' do not merely reflect what they know. Each account is a specific construction and presents the object of speech in a certain way. Sometimes people *construct* their accounts consciously and on other occasions less self-consciously (Potter & Wetherell, 1987: 34).

Potter and Wetherell (1987: 32), drawing on the speech act theory of the British philosopher John Austin and the notion of indexicality in ethnomethodology argue that people often 'use their language *to do* thing'. In other words, language, as employed by people in their everyday conversations, often has a specific *function*. They posit that due to the functional nature of people's speech, there is 'considerable variation' in

their accounts (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 33). These accounts vary from one person to another and also with the same person at different times in different circumstances. As a result of this, variability becomes a significant feature of people's accounts of the world. Traditionally, studies conducted in the social sciences have tried to reduce and contain variability in accounts by using standardized questionnaires and creating finite and relatively inflexible categories to classify people's responses (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Commenting on the variability of accounts, Potter and Wetherell (1987: 33) write:

In general, we find that if talk is orientated to many different functions, global and specific, any examination of language over time reveals considerable *variation*.

(emphasis in original)

According to Potter and Wetherell (1987), the variability in accounts is due to the fact that people's speech is never merely descriptive, it is always functional. For them 'functionality' is a fundamental quality of people's speech. Whenever we construct something – for example a house – it is rarely done without a specific purpose. We build a house because we might want to provide for ourselves and our family members a protected space to live in. Therefore, the term construction connotes purpose or function – the overt activity, speaking, almost always aims to achieve something. Because at different times, people want to achieve different ends and purposes, there is variation in their speech. Examples of purpose in people's talk can include persuading, appeasing, scoring points, justifying one's actions, apportioning responsibility or blame, and preparing the ground for a future course of action.

The factors that influence the variability in people's accounts can include:

- a) availability of different cultural, linguistic, religious, social and political resources;
- b) the nature and extent of investment or stake in the topic of the conversation;
- c) different audiences;
- d) social contexts;
- e) self-presentation;

- f) the lack of fixed and straightforward correspondence between the words, terms and concepts and the aspects or objects of the external world, the former purport to represent.

The above is not an exhaustive list but it highlights some important reasons for the variability in people's accounts of the events, phenomena, objects and categories of the world. People inhabit different, cultural, linguistic, religious, social and political frameworks, which inevitably affect the way they construct the accounts of the world. Making a similar point, Bakhtin (1986: 88) writes:

In each epoch, in each social circle, in each small world of family, friends, acquaintances, and comrades in which a human being grows and lives, there are always authoritative utterances that set the tone—artistic, scientific, and journalistic works on which one relies, to which one refers, which are cited, imitated, and followed.

Thus, when people describe events as being either good or bad, their accounts are contingent on the cultural, social, religious and political resources available to them and as such their accounts are at best provisional, which sanitise and iron out other versions. The cultural, social, religious and political investments create for people what Potter (cited in Wetherell, 2001: 21) refers to as 'stake'. For example, the claim by President Bush and his government that the attacks on the twin towers were driven by a warped and evil ideology is *one* possible way of describing these acts. The perpetrators and people in sympathy with them saw these as acts of resistance against and retribution for a country that trampled the rights of other peoples and nations. A person speaking from either of these perspectives can be seen as constructing a specific account that would serve to make his/her position appear reasonable and tenable. Their respective accounts would have been influenced by their specific life histories and the resultant stake in their respective ways of interpreting these events. The accounts of both these groups of people constitute a 'provisional analysis of reality' which they come to 'regard ... as final' (Whorf, 1956: 263). The proponents of both these positions would present their respective accounts as authentic – representing the world as it *actually is* (Whorf, 1956). However, beneath the surface of this moral certitude there is actually a spectrum of competing positions from which the speaker chooses the position that s/he espouses.

Similarly, the same people would construct their positions differently in different social circumstances, depending on who their audience is. For example, young people, like the ones who participated in my research, would not speak in the same way, drawing on the same linguistic resources, within their group of friends as they would with their parents or in the presence of their teachers and members of their school leadership team. Thus, the sense of audience is another factor that leads to variability in people's accounts.

When people talk they often try to present a certain image of themselves in front of their audience (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, 2001). By doing this, they create what Wetherell (2001: 23) refers to as 'subject positions'. Consider the following excerpt from President Obama's address to the nation on Syria made on September 10, 2013 (Obama, 2013):

I have resisted calls for military action because we cannot resolve someone else's civil war through force, particularly after a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Notwithstanding the fact that President Obama was one of those few world leaders who had been strongly in favour of military action against the government of President Bashar Al Assad, in the above excerpt, he can be seen as trying to present an image of himself as a president who has been reluctant to resort to force to settle international issues.

Billig et al. (1988) posit that human thinking is essentially dilemmatic and our common-sense ways of describing the world are frequently conflicting and contradictory. Therefore, when a person speaks, his/her speech is the culmination of internal and external debates and reflects conscious or unconscious choices that s/he has made. Therefore, people's speech is rarely a collection of 'mere labels which neutrally package up the world' (Billig et al. 1988: 16). Harris (1981) also challenges the idea that our language unproblematically conveys meanings that are universal and inhere in the objects and for which our words are merely transparent labels. He says this creates the 'language myth' based on the 'determinacy fallacy' which makes us believe that we 'use the 'same words' to express the 'same ideas' supplied by Nature' (Harris, 1981: 10). Thus, in many instances the variability of accounts is due to the fact that our use of language to describe the objects, events and phenomena of the external world does

transparently communicate *reality*. For example, the movement of resistance against the British rule in India in 1857 was referred to as ‘mutiny’ by the British government and ‘war of independence’ by the indigenous people. Therefore, the accounts of these events of 1857 in India varied tremendously depending who was speaking – a Hindu nationalist, a Muslim nationalist or a British administrator.

Shotter (1993: 28) argues that human language can be better understood as a ‘rhetorical-responsive’ system instead of a ‘referential-representational’ one. The latter refers to the traditional view of language as a transparent medium that unproblematically represents the external world. The former, on the other hand, presents a much more dynamic, albeit less straightforward, take on language. It implies that language is a rhetorical device used by people to create certain effects and thereby persuade others of their viewpoints. Therefore, as discussed above, when people speak about an issue, rather than communicating what they ‘know’, they actively construct their versions to perform certain *functions*.

In the context of my thesis, this rhetorical function of language is pertinent. When politicians speak about international affairs, especially in the context of conflicts, their speech constructs a specific version of events rather than presenting the facts (Edwards and Potter, 1992). For example, in his address to the joint session of the Congress, on September 20, 2001, President Bush, giving information about the identity of the people who attacked the World Trade Center, said (Bush, 2001a): ‘They are the same murderers indicted for bombing American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and responsible for bombing the USS Cole.’ From a social constructionist perspective, President Bush’s remarks about the identity of the attackers rather than presenting *the truth* are *constructing* the individuals, who carried out the attacks, in a specific way. By using the term ‘murderers’ the president was employing, as argued by Edwards and Potter (1992: 160) the strategy of ‘category entitlement’ to construct the perpetrators of these actions in a certain way. They are classified as ‘murderers’ – a consensual criminal category – who would be expected to carry out such horrific acts. Moreover, by positing that the attackers belonged to the same group of people who had attacked US interests in the past, President Bush was creating amongst the American people a sense of anxiety that would legitimise the use of force to punish these ‘murderers’ and prevent their nefarious designs in the future.

2.3 From the Epistemic Subject to the Linguistic Self

In the preceding section, I outlined the social constructionist idea of how people through their talk *construct accounts* and *version* of events, phenomena and categories of the world, which in many cases serve specific functions. Variability is an important feature of these accounts. This position is predicated on social constructionism's challenge to the notion of the knowing subject, what Piaget (cited in Hutchings, 1997: 32) referred to as the 'epistemic' subject. Social constructionism's radical view of the human subject is important for my thesis because it leads to a very different way of understanding what the participants of my research said during the focus group sessions.

The rational, rule governed, unitary epistemic subject has been the lynchpin of traditional social psychology (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). It also forms one pole of the Enlightenment 'individual-society' (Henriques et al., 1984) or the subject-object dualism. The modern conception of the epistemic subject is driven by the assumption that the human subject is a self-contained entity, like other objects of the natural world (Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

Traditional psychology assumes that through the application of rigorous methods, the inner kernel of the human subject can be reached, studied and authentically theorised (Henriques et al., 1984; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Shotter, 1993; Burr, 1995, 2003). The human subject is taken as the autonomous and self-sufficient unit, distinct from other human subjects and the world. S/he is the initiator of experience and is capable of objectively observing and knowing the world. This self-contained unit, the epistemic subject, is in distinct contrast with the world and other individuals and as such forms the basis of the subject-object binary epitomised in the Cartesian statement *cogito ergo sum*. However, social constructionism disrupts this clear and neat binary and the notion of the self-contained, unitary human subject, positing it as much more labile, ad hoc and enmeshed in a profusion of relationships (Bakhtin, 1986; Shotter, 1993; Gergen, 2009b).

For Shotter (1993) the traditional conception of the individual, self-contained, autonomous, sovereign subject is a grave fallacy and deprives us from developing a more rewarding understanding of ourselves – selves imbricated in relationships with other selves. Shotter (1993: 45) writes:

...the current view we have of persons, as all equal, self-enclosed (essentially indistinguishable) atomic individuals, possessing an inner sovereignty, each living their separate lives, all in isolation from each other – the supposed experience of the modern self – is an illusion...It would seem that people's 'inner' lives are neither so private, nor so inner, nor so merely orderly or logical, as has been assumed.

Gergen (1999/2009a, 2009b) also suggests a much more labile and dynamic view of the human subject, one that is constituted in and through relationships. These relationships for Gergen (2009b) are not between the individual Cartesian subjects but are the very substance of which the human self is made. As a result, all action and thought comes out of relationships and it is because of this that he refers to the human subject as a 'relational being' (Gergen, 2009b: xv).

Bakhtin (1986: 68) presents the human subject as enmeshed in a generative flux of speech communication. He criticised Saussurian linguistics because it posited linguistic exchange as a mechanical process and referred to such passive conceptions of language users as 'a scientific fiction'. For Bakhtin (1986) the speaker is actively *engaged* in the process of linguistic communication. Even when s/he is listening, they are actively interpreting, constructing and responding to what is being said. Sometimes the listener might not immediately and/or outwardly respond to speech because the social occasion does not require him/her to do so. However, in such instances too, the listener actively manipulates what he hears (or reads) and this process affects his own sense of the relevant aspects of the world and himself.

From a social constructionist perspective (e.g. Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Bakhtin, 1986; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Shotter, 1993; Gergen, 1999/2009a & 2009b; Burr, 1995, 2003), the human subject is fundamentally and inextricably linked to his/her surrounding the social fabric, which is woven through language. For Shotter (1993), in order to understand the human subject and what they say, it is important to view him/her as firmly located in the 'everyday, background common sense' social environment from which they cannot be extricated. He argues that the human subject and what they say can only be meaningfully understood as engaged in a dialectical process of everyday negotiation and social exchanges.

Billig et al. (1988) claim that the human subject is imbricated in a social world replete with common-sense notions and ideas that are conflicting, contradictory and competing. For them, this chaotic sea of common sense ideas is not an epiphenomenon that needs purging while studying the human subject; it is the ontological basis of the subject. In order to make sense of what people say, instead of trying to 'uncover' the 'inner, private' mental structures one needs to study the everyday, common-sensical ideas in which individuals are immersed. Based on the contradictory nature of everyday thinking, Billig et al. (1988) argue that a society's collective, everyday ideas are essentially ideological. These everyday ideological ideas form an important resource on which people draw during their talk.

Thus, what the participants of my research said during the focus group sessions can be meaningfully understood only when one pays attention to the linguistic, cultural, social, religious and political resources that may have been available to them and the discourses they may have drawn upon. In the next section, I will briefly discuss this process through which people jointly construct their understanding of the world.

2.4 Towards a Relational Epistemology

One of the key tenets of social constructionism, on which there is at least a basic agreement amongst various writers, is that the human world cannot be studied using the traditional scientific approaches bequeathed to us by the European Enlightenment and that alternative ways of making sense of this are needed (Whorf, 1956; Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Rorty, 1979; Harris, 1981; Ossorio, 1981; Bakhtin, 1986; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Billig et al., 1988; Edwards and Potter, 1992; Shotter, 1993; Hughes and Sharrock, 1997; Hutchings, 1997; Gergen, 1999/2009a, 2009b; Burr, 1995, 2003).

One of the grounds on which the traditional, Enlightenment epistemology has been criticised by social constructionism is that it takes language as a transparent medium of communication. In this view, language un-problematically and faithfully represents the external world. According to this view, we first experience the world and then use language to 'objectively' represent this experience. Thus, the world of objects and human perception of these is both independent of and exist a priori to its representation in language. Gergen (1999/2009a: 6) writes:

...the idea that we first experience the world, and then try to put the experience into words, is the view of *language as a picture*. That is, if our experience mirrors the world – thus providing us with a mental picture – then effective language should communicate to others the picture in our minds.

(emphasis in original)

In the view of language as a picture, our perception of objects in the world, represented through the transparent medium of language constitute *facts* – nuggets of ‘true’ knowledge that are objective and unbiased, representing the world *as it exists*. Shotter (1993: 70) challenges this view and argues that ‘Facts, however, are not the cause of our perceptual processes, but their result.’ He maintains that their ‘naturalness’ comprise factors that are essentially culturally and historically contingent. This belief in ‘natural essence’ of things is legitimized by the metaphor of ‘finding’ or ‘discovering’ in natural sciences instead of *making* or *constructing* (Shotter, 1993). For Potter and Wetherell (1987: 136) in traditional social psychology ‘categories’ are entities which are seen to have a ‘factual’ status because they are ‘preformed and enduring’.

Shotter (1993: 88) posits that we tend to see language as a ‘conduit’. The ‘conduit’ metaphor assumes that if we are effective and proficient users of language we communicate our ideas un-problematically and without ‘distortion’ to others. We assume that we have communicated our ideas from our minds, which according to Rorty (1979) is a Cartesian legacy, to other minds without any interference from the conduit. However, Shotter (1993) maintains that we can never assume that our message has been exactly replicated in the listener’s mind. As Bakhtin (1986: 68) points out the listener is not a mere passive recipient of speech because s/he too ‘takes an active, responsive attitude toward’ the speech directed to them. Therefore, the people towards whom our speech is directed *interpret* what they hear. And, interpretation is an open ended, creative process and does not guarantee exact reproduction of the speaker’s intentions. It is because of this, Bakhtin (1986) argues that human speech is always dialogic and is never an isolated, self-contained utterance. Whorf (1956: 258) also points out that ‘We are all mistaken in our common belief that any word has an “exact meaning”.’

Social constructionism challenges the 'picture' and the 'conduit' views of language (Whorf, 1956; Rorty, 1979; Harris, 1981; Ossorio, 1981; Bakhtin, 1986; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Billig et al., 1988; Shotter, 1993; Gergen, 1999/2009a, 2009b; Burr, 1995, 1998, 2003). Gergen (1999/2009a: 33) uses the analogy of 'threshing machines' for nouns in a language. Just like a threshing machine converts a wheat field into bits of grain which are useful for human beings, a language chops and categorises the amorphous world into bits of 'ordered' reality (Gergen 1999/2009a). Every language has its own unique system of *ordering* reality. This is a serious challenge to the picture or the conduit view of language which sees language as a neutral channel for representing and communicating reality as exists in the external world. Harris (1981) argues that we seldom look at this 'formative' function of language. He says that we commonly talk about language as a noun that has a plural form – languages. Thus we may talk about how many languages we can speak. However, we seldom pay attention to the term language as a noun that has no plurals and refers to the linguistic domain in a general or abstracted manner. As discussed earlier, Harris (1981: 9) posits, this creates the 'language myth'. This myth pervades the modern world and encourages us to see language as a transparent medium that communicates 'without distortion the actuality it purports to represent' (Harris, 1981: 26).

Potter and Wetherell (1987), Shotter (1993), Gergen (1999/2009a) and Wetherell (2001) argue that far from being a transparent referential system, language is a rhetorical device. Shotter (1993) and Gergen (1999/2009a) maintain that rhetoric acquired a negative connotation in the post-Enlightenment world in which objectivity and truth became the cherished touchstones of valid and reliable knowledge. Gergen (1999/2009a) argues that rhetoric is a pervasive aspect of human language usage. In certain contexts, like advertisements and political campaigns, rhetorical devices are more easily discernible. However, in certain other domains, like scientific texts, rhetoric operates more subtly and indiscernibly. It is here where the rhetorical dimension of language is more dangerous because it masks the rhetoric by references to rationality and concrete, objective experience. Gergen (1999/2009a: 41) writes:

More dangerous are communications that only "report the facts" – the world as it is , outside anyone's particular perspective...Too often, a resort to the facts functions to silence other voices. Too often, the language of objective

reality is used as a means of generating hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion. This is so not only in science... but it is also the case more generally, where those who don't speak the rhetoric are scorned as "unrealistic", "deluded", "irrational", or "self-deceived".

For Gergen (1999/2009a: 42) rhetoric creates the *impression* of reality in two ways. Firstly, because reality relates to the 'world out there', the speaker tries to create the image of distance between himself and the reality that s/he is talking about. Words like '*the, that, or those*' (Gergen 1999/2009a: 42) help create this feeling of distance between the speaker and the object to which his/her speech refers and, hence, a sense of objectivity. Secondly, by purifying the speech of any references to the personal beliefs, inclinations, desires and experiences of the speaker gives the impression of non-interference and objectivity, again creating the illusion of objectivity and untainted realism. Thus, objectivity rather than being state of reality is actually a rhetorical accomplishment.

The rhetorical function of language is confined not only to helping speakers achieve their purposes and giving the gloss of objectivity and truth to knowledge, which is contingent, ad hoc and tentative. Bakhtin (1986), Billig et al. (1988) Gadamer (1991), Shotter (1993), Gergen (1999/2009a) maintain that the rhetorical dimension of language also plays an important role in the life of a community. Shotter (1993: 54), drawing on Vico, discusses the idea of 'sensus communis' – 'a culture's common sense'. According to Shotter (1993: 54), sensus communis is created by a community's 'commonplaces' or 'shared moments in a flow of social activity which afford common reference'. Language for Vico (as cited in Shotter, 1993) is predicated on a set of such common reference points, comprising a shared system of beliefs and values.

Gergen (1999/2009a: 43) argues that a community's sense of cohesion is sustained by the 'rhetoric of reality'. This reality is essentially intralinguistic. Berger and Luckman (1966: 56) referred to the process of construction of reality through language as 'linguistic objectification', which enabled people to 'live in the common-sense world of everyday life equipped with special bodies of knowledge'. Bakhtin (1986: 88) maintains that every human society, no matter how big or small, is based on some 'authoritative utterances' that become the reference points for valid and reliable knowledge. For example, within the modern international system any unprovoked act of aggression

against the citizens or territory of a nation-state is deemed as an act of hostility and merits retaliatory action from the army of the victim state. This principle, usually referred to self-defence, can be seen as an instance of 'sensus communis' of the Westphalian international community that is also articulated in the Charter of the United Nations (United Nations 1945: Article 2).

Social constructionism suggests that rather than being solitary, self-contained, autonomous epistemic subjects, people continually construct and reconstruct their understanding of themselves and the world around them, jointly with one another. Gergen (1999/2009a) argues that our systems of meaning are social accomplishments, which we achieve in collaboration with one another. He refers to this joint production of meaning as 'co-action' (Gergen, 1999/2009a: 98).

Shotter (1993: 39) uses the term 'joint action' to refer to the joint systems of understanding and meaning that people create in tandem with one another. He argues that by doing so:

...people create, without a conscious realization of the fact, a changing sea of *moral* enablements and constraints, of privileges and entitlements, and obligations and sanctions – in short, an ethos.

(Shotter, 1993: 39)

This 'ethos' creates possibilities for people to participate in *constructing* their own realities. These realities are never identical and in complete harmony with those of other members of the group. Being able to participate in the dialogue gives a person his/her agency and voice. It is in this exchange of voices or the conversational background, referred to as joint action by Shotter (1993: 39) that human reality is continually constructed and reconstructed.

Bakhtin (1986: 89) argues that what a person says is continually 'shaped and developed' by other people's utterances. This process must not be confused with a simplistic imitation or internalisation of other people's ideas; this is a creative process in which the speaker actively engages with other people's speech and produces what has an indelibly personal quality to it and as a result has 'varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our-own-ness," varying degrees of awareness and detachment' (Bakhtin, 1986: 89). It is this dialogic quality of human speech that makes the thinking

process possible in the first place. Therefore, whenever we speak our speech reflects a creative amalgam or smorgasbord of other people's utterances and our own unique thoughts. Thus, from a social constructionist perspective, people's construction of the world is the result of neither a passive internalisation of other texts nor an entirely isolated, personal accomplishment – it is a creative process whereby other voices merge with the speaker's own thinking and produces a unique subjective position.

The alternative epistemology where knowledge is socially constructed by people has important implications for the processes of education and school curricula, especially in areas like history, geography and citizenship education. If knowledge rather than having a concrete, objective basis is socially constructed by people then school curricula built on either the aims and objectives or the content driven model of curriculum planning become highly problematic (Ross, 2000; Kelly, 2004/2009). These models of curriculum planning assume a static view of knowledge and conceptualise learning as either internalisation of a 'worthwhile', fixed body of knowledge or achievement of certain fixed competencies articulated as learning objectives (Ross, 2000; Kelly, 2004/2009). Both these models of curriculum planning and accompanying pedagogical philosophy assume the learner to be passive – either a vessel to be filled or an organism whose behaviour has to be modified (Ross, 2000; Kelly, 2004/2009).

If we believe that knowledge is socially constructed by people in the intra-linguistic and inter-linguistic spaces then a need to reconceptualise the curriculum, pedagogy and learning becomes urgent. Kelly (2004/2009) argues that if we take knowledge to be provisional, evolving and negotiated through social processes then the content and aims and objectives driven model of curriculum planning will not do. He proposes an alternative model for curriculum planning that he refers to as the 'process approach' (Kelly, 2004/2009: 81). In the process driven model, knowledge is seen as 'socially constructed' (Kelly 2004/2009: 31) and is never shorn of dynamics of ideology and power. Such a curriculum requires an active engagement of all – the learners as well as teachers – where they jointly construct and reconstruct their knowledge of the world. This conception of curriculum and pedagogy closely resembles what Freire (1970/2005: 80) refers to as 'problem-posing' education. In this conception of education, a learning community is envisaged where everyone learns – the learners as

well as teachers – through a process of dialogue, and learning becomes a ‘joint responsibility’.

Social constructionist epistemology and the ideas of joint construction of meaning that Gergen (1999/2009a:98) refers to as ‘co-action’ and Shotter (1993: 39) as ‘joint action’ have important implications for our understanding of what people say in various social contexts. Consequently, it has ramifications for social research; individual interviews have very different social dynamics compared to focus groups. In a focus group, what participants say can be seen as a joint construction of meaning. The focus group membership entitles the individual members to have a voice, which may at times corroborate and at others challenge what others say. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 376) maintain that in a focus group ‘It is from the *interaction* of the group that the data emerge.’

In conclusion, social constructionism offers an account of knowledge that is a radical departure from the traditional, Enlightenment view of knowledge predicated on the rationalist and empiricist ideologies. Social constructionism rather than seeing language as a ‘conduit’ or a ‘transparent medium’ for recording and communicating knowledge is posited as a fecund site where knowledge is created and constructed by people within their everyday social interactions with one another. And this view of knowledge has important ramifications for the way school curricula are planned, teaching and learning is transacted and data in social research is collected and analysed.

2.5 Discourse

As I have discussed in the previous sections, social constructionism has challenged the traditional ways of making sense of the world. Most social constructionist writers (e.g. Whorf, 1956; Rorty, 1979; Harris, 1981; Ossorio, 1981; Bakhtin, 1986; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Billig et al., 1988; Edwards and Potter, 1992; Shotter, 1993; Edwards, Ashmore & Potter, 2003; Gergen, 1999/2009a, 2009b; Burr, 1995, 2003) have argued that we construct our sense of the world through the medium of language. Many of them have drawn, to varying degrees, on the writings of the French philosopher Michel Foucault and his notion of discourse. This is an important strand of the theoretical framework of my thesis.

I begin this section by briefly describing the term 'discourse' and some of the theoretical and disciplinary contexts within which the idea emerged. Subsequently, I analyse the term discourse in the context of the French poststructuralist tradition, especially as developed by Michel Foucault (1970, 1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1966/1989a, 1969/1989b).

In an everyday sense, the term discourse refers to 'spoken language or ways of speaking' (Dijk, 1997:1). In other words, discourse in lay terms refers to relatively extended instances of spoken language. The term discourse has been used extensively in various academic disciplines in a range of different ways (Burr, 1995; Mills, 1997). Some of these usages are similar, others different and some even competing with each other. In an academic sense, the idea of discourse is much more complex and varied and depends on the discipline and perspective one uses to talk about it. The origin of the term discourse, as it is generally used in social sciences, can be located in some intellectual developments and shifts that took place around the middle of the twentieth century (Macdonell, 1986). These shifts concerned the relationship between language and meaning. Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1983) disrupted the accepted understanding of this relationship. He proposed that meaning rather than inhering in the objects of the external world was an intra-linguistic phenomenon (Saussure, 1983; Culler, 1986; Macdonell, 1986). The posthumous publication of this work initiated an immense interest in the study of language as a site where meaning was constructed.

One of the directions in which the mid-twentieth century interest in study of language led to was the field of discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Dijk, 1997). Discourse analysts look at how people use language in social contexts to achieve their various purposes (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). A closely related approach to the study of language is that of conversation analysis 'which grew out of the ethnomethodological tradition in sociology developed by Harold Garfinkel' (Liddicoat, 2007: 2). In conversation analysis the focus is on the details of people's use of spoken language – for example, how they take turns and negotiate and manage silences and gaps within their conversations.

The way in which I have used the term discourse in my thesis is more in line with the poststructuralist tradition, especially the writings of French philosopher Michel

Foucault (1970, 1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1966/1989a, 1969/1989b; Burr, 1995, 2003; Mills, 2003). This take on discourse is not incompatible with discourse analysis as developed in social psychology (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) and conversation analysis influenced by ethnomethodology (Burr, 1995). However, Foucault's use of the term implies different points of salience and emphasis.

2.5.1 Foucauldian Discourse

Discourse is one of the most commonly used terms in Foucault's writing (Mills 2003). Foucault was basically interested in developing a new 'method of historical analysis freed from the anthropological theme' (Foucault, 1969/1989b: 17). In other words, Foucault wanted to challenge through his writing the traditional method of historical research, predicated on the twin pillars of the 'founding subject' and 'originating experience' (Foucault, 1970: 65). By doing so, Foucault's work (1970, 1966/1989a, 1969/1989b) challenges both the ideas of the rational Cartesian subject, and the experiencing individual – the respective fulcrums of the idealist and empiricist ideologies. The key tool that Foucault (1970, 1966/1989a, 1969/1989b) presents to do so is discourse.

Foucault (1969/1989b: 121) defines discourse 'as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation'. Foucault (1969/1989b: 121) explains that discourses comprise groups of linguistic signs that are so organised that they form 'statements'. Foucault (1969/1989b: 97) defines the statement as:

. . . a function of existence that properly belongs to signs and on the basis of which one may then decide, through analysis or intuition, whether or not they 'make sense', according to what rule they follow one another or are juxtaposed, of what they are the sign, and what sort of act is carried out by their formulation (oral or written).

Mills (2003) argues that we should refrain from the temptation to conflate discourse with language. Discourse rather than communicating reality forms the 'system which structures the way we perceive reality' (Mills, 2003: 55). In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (1969/1989b: 53-54) writes:

"I would like to show that 'discourses', in the form in which they can be heard or read, are not, as one might expect, a mere intersection of things and words: an obscure web of things, and a manifest, visible, coloured chain of words; ... I

would like to show with precise examples that in analysing discourses themselves, one sees the loosening of the embrace, apparently so tight, of words and things, and the emergence of a group of rules proper to discursive practice. ... discourses [are not] groups of signs ... but ... practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.”

Foucault (1970, 1969/1989b) emphasises that the objects that discourse forms are neither ‘anterior to discourse’, reducible to ‘a lexical organisation, [n]or the scansion of semantic field’ or ‘the elements of meaning at the disposal of speaking subjects’ (1989b:52-3). These objects appear within the interiority of discourse that exists as a practice which is governed by a ‘body of rules’ (Foucault, 1969/1989b: 53). Objects do not exist in a pristine form, prior to their appropriation by discourse; instead they are created by discourse itself which disperses these, according to certain rules, within a constellation of other objects and concepts within a given discursive formation (Foucault, 1969/1989b). These regularities and rules of dispersion operate within what Foucault (1969/1989b: 41) refers to as a ‘discursive formation’.

Foucault (1969/1989b: 35) was interested in analysing the genesis and nature of apparently unified fields like ‘medicine, grammar or political economy’ etc. According to him, fields like these were characterised by a group of statements that were apparently related to one another. However, he rejects the hypotheses that the principles unifying these groups of statements or fields of study were based either on the unity of objects, the style of articulation of statements, the unity and coherence of concepts or their thematic coherence. Instead of these apparent unities, what underlay these fields were ‘tables of difference’ and ‘systems of dispersion’ (Foucault, 1969/1989b: 41). He writes:

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*...

Within a given discursive formation, statements combine together according to certain ‘rules of formation’ (Foucault 1969/1989b: 42). For Foucault (1969/1989b: 42) these ‘rules of formation are conditions of existence (but also of coexistence, maintenance,

modification, and disappearance)' for objects, concepts and statements within a discursive formation. The groups of statement belonging to a given discursive formation form the contours of a topic or even an academic discipline. Thus, a discipline like international relations may be seen as discursive formation – a large group of statements that combine together according to certain 'rules of formation' (Foucault 1969/1989b: 42). However, a discursive formation is predicated neither on a 'tightly packed, continuous, geographically well-defined field of objects' nor 'on a definite, normative type of statement' (Foucault 1969/1989b: 41). Within a given discursive formation, according to its rules of formation, statements combine and form discourses.

However objects and concepts of discourse are not generally formed at will by the speaking subject because the 'production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures' (Foucault, 1970: 52). According to Foucault (Mills, 2003: 57), we can utter any number of statements that could be linguistically and grammatically correct 'but what is surprising is that, in fact, we choose to speak within very narrowly confined limits'. Foucault (1970) identifies two sets of constraints or exclusionary mechanisms – external and internal – which control what can be said within a discourse because 'one cannot speak of anything at any time; it is not easy to say something new' (Foucault, 1969/1989b: 49).

The set of external constraints comprise 'taboo', 'the opposition between reason and madness', 'the opposition between true and false' and the 'will to truth' (Foucault 1970: 53). Taboo relates to the fact that in every society, in a given historical period, it is 'difficult to speak about certain subjects such as sexuality and death' (Mills, 2003: 58). For example, within the discursive formation of 'Islamic terrorism' and the 'war on terror', speaking of the possible grievances and violation of fundamental rights of certain groups of people as possible factors that motivated certain individuals to attack US interests would count as a taboo. According to Foucault (1970: 53), since the middle ages, the madman has been deprived of the right to speak because 'his words may be considered null and void, having neither truth nor importance.' He may speak as much as he likes but he will never be considered to be 'in the true' (Foucault, 1970: 61) and his speech will be annulled by the exclusionary mechanisms of discourse. The distinction between true and false for Foucault (1970) constitutes a system of judging

what knowledge will be accorded the status of truth and what will be denied this privilege. These criteria of truth 'are arbitrary to start with or . . . at least are organised around historical contingencies' (Foucault, 1970: 54). The 'will to truth' (Foucault, 1970: 55), the final external constraint on discourse, relates to what counts as useful and valid directions for creating new knowledge. Foucault (1970: 55) elaborates the notion by referring to sixteenth century England where the knowing subject was invested with the warrant to 'sketch[ed] out schemas of possible, observable, measureable, classifiable objects'. The recent proliferation of interest in studying the idea of 'Islamic terrorism' can be seen as an instance of 'the will to know' in the 21st century, in the context of the September 11 attacks and the discourse of 'war on terror' that followed.

In addition to the external exclusionary mechanism of discourse, Foucault (1970: 57) identifies four 'internal procedures' of exclusion and control exercised by the discourse. These comprise 'commentary', 'the author', 'disciplines' and the 'rarefaction of the speaking subject' (Foucault, 1970: 56-61). Foucault (1970: 56) uses the terms of 'primary and secondary text' to explain the notion of commentary. The primary text can be an original work of literature or any other seminal text like the Bible or the Koran. The secondary text or the commentary consists of 'a certain number of new speech-acts which take them [primary texts] up, transform them or speak of them' (Foucault, 1970: 57). The commentaries on the primary texts, whether religious, literary, sociological or political, proffer specific interpretations and they do so by simultaneously excluding alternative explanations. By author, Foucault means the person who is the source of discourses and forms 'a principle of grouping of discourses, conceived as the unity and origin of their meanings, as the focus of their coherence' (Foucault, 1970: 58). In the context of the discourse of 'war on terror', President George Bush can be seen as performing the author function because he used it for the first time in 2001 to 'characterize the US conflict with Islamic extremists' (EBSCOHOST, 2013). His status as the author of the discourse of 'war on terror' made his explanation of events count as valid and authoritative, marginalizing alternative viewpoints. In 'The Order of Discourse' Foucault (1970: 59) defines a discipline as 'a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments'. The field of international

relations could be cited as an instance of the Foucauldian discipline; nation state and a sovereign government would be classified as valid objects, studying the interaction of nation states with one another would count as a method, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a nation state would count as a rule, and perspectives like realism and constructivism would form the techniques and instruments of the discipline. By 'rarefaction of the speaking subject' Foucault (1970: 62) means that a person would not be allowed to 'enter the order of discourse if he does not satisfy certain requirements or if he is not, from the outset, qualified to do so'. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault (1969/1989b: 55) argues that not everyone has 'the right, sanctioned by law or tradition, juridically defined or spontaneously accepted to proffer such a discourse'. Taking the example of the use of the term 'war on terror' for the first time by President Bush in 2001, the ensuing discourse might not have such wide currency had the term been used by the head of state of a smaller, less powerful country. In other words, President Bush had 'the right to use this sort of language' (Foucault, 1970: 55).

According to Foucault (1970, 1969/1989b) one of the key effects of discourse is the production of knowledge through statements that are 'in the true' (1970: 61). However, for Foucault, truth does not exist exterior to and independent of discourse (Foucault, 1970, 1969/1989b, Rouse, 2005). In fact, discourse forms the 'locus of emergence of concepts', which are the building blocks of our knowledge of the world – knowledge that constitutes the truth. For Foucault, truth inheres neither in the 'horizon of ideality' (1989b: 68), in the objects that 'wait in limbo' (1969/1989b: 49) to be discovered by the experiencing subject, in language that is merely 'a system for possible statements' (1969/1989b: 30), nor in the 'the continuous generosity of meaning' (1970: 73) within the linguistic system. Thus, Foucault's theory of discourse presents a radical point of departure for our understanding of notions of knowledge and truth:

. . . we must not resolve discourse into a play of pre-existing significations; we must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would have only to decipher; the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge ; there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favour. We must conceive discourse as a violence we do to things, or in any case a practice which we impose on them . . .

According to Foucault (1980b: 118), trying to separate truth from untruth in discourse is an exercise in futility because the 'effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false'. Another radical assertion that Foucault (1980a, 1980b) makes is about the relationship between truth and power. Truth is created and sustained by mechanisms of power that saturate a society in a 'capillary form of existence' (Foucault 1980a: 39). For Foucault (1980a: 52), 'Knowledge and power are integrated with one another, and there is no point in dreaming of a time when knowledge will cease to depend on power...'

As Hall (2001) points out, knowledge that is backed by power not only presents itself as true but also has the ability to get itself granted the seal of truth in society. Very often social and political knowledge creates truths that give rise to 'practices of discipline, surveillance, and constraint', which ultimately lead to 'new forms of social control' (Rouse, 2005: 97). In the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the ensuing discourse of the 'war on terror' created a sense of danger and anxiety about the threat posed by militant Islam that resulted in a proliferation of knowledge, or a 'will to know' about the extremist mind-set, which in turn provided legitimacy to exercise various forms of surveillance adopted by various Western governments, especially the US and the UK, on people, including their own citizens.

As discussed above, discourse, according to Foucault (1970, 1980, 1966/1989a, 1969/1989b), cannot be reduced to merely the linguistic level. Campbell (2007: 216) a poststructuralist international relations scholar says that 'discourses are performative' and give rise to 'discursive practices', which lead to certain courses of action by excluding other options. Solomon (2009: 281-5) insightfully explains how, against the wider backdrop of the discourse of 'war on terror,' Saddam Hussein's regime was discursively constructed, by President Bush and other parts of the US establishment, as a threat to American values of freedom and democracy by invoking terms and phrases like 'axis of evil', 'contemporary incarnation of Hitlerism, militarism, and communism', 'outlaw regime', 'evil regime', 'terrorist' and 'rogue state'. This discursive construction of Saddam and *his* Iraq made 'the idea of an American-led invasion of Iraq more palatable and sensible' to the American public (Solomon, 2009: 276). Thus, discourses

are not merely linguistic constructions; they have *real and physical* – at times brutal – implications.

Thus, for Foucault (1980b: 122), truth never exists independent of power; effects of truth are induced by mechanisms of power that infiltrate the

‘State apparatus . . . [whose] meta-power with its prohibitions can only take hold and secure its footing where it is rooted in a whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations’.

For Foucault (1980a, 1969/1989b) the task of the historian or the intellectual is to analyse the discourses that circulate in society and make visible their mutual articulations and their points of mutual compatibilities as well as incompatibilities and the exclusionary mechanisms that they exercise and render silent and push to the margins many other discourses. However, this must not be confused with separating truth from falsehood because:

It’s not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power) but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time.

(Foucault, 1980b: 133)

In recent years, the notion of discourse has been used by scholars and researchers, of a poststructuralist orientation, working in various disciplines including education (e.g. Hey, 1997; Hutchings, 1997; Francis, 2003; MacNaughton, 2005; Burman, 2008; Ailwood, 2010; Durrani & Dunne, 2010; Dussel, 2010; Leese, 2010; Blundell, 2012; Thomas, 2013) and international relations (e.g. Bankoff, 2003; Troyer, 2003; Campbell, 2007; Jackson, 2007a, 2007b; Kiersey, 2009; Solomon, 2009; Ailwood, 2010; Featherstone, Holohan & Poole, 2010). Francis (1998) used the idea of discourse to study children’s constructions of gender in English primary schools. Francis (1998: 7) states that she found Foucault’s idea of discourse useful because it helped her in highlighting the socially constructed nature of gender and challenging ‘gender essentialism’. Jackson (2007a: 395), an international relations scholar, used the theoretical framework of discourse to analyse the notions of ‘Islamic terrorism’. In order to do this, he researched an extensive corpus of relevant documents like speeches of political leaders, think-tank reports, journalistic articles, popular and

academic books and journal articles. He argues that the discourse of 'war on terror' draws on a range of historical and socio-political antecedents, including:

. . . the 'good war' narrative surrounding the struggle against fascism during the Second World War; mythologies of the Cold War, including the notion of 'the long war', the deeply embedded civilization-versus-barbarism narrative, the cult of innocence, the language and assumptions of the enemy within, the labels and narratives of 'rogue states', and the discourse surrounding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

(Jackson, 2007a: 400-1)

Similarly, Durrani and Dunne (2010) conducted research, employing the notion of discourse, to explore how the curriculum in some state schools, in the North West Frontier Province (now renamed as the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province), contributed to pupils' constructions of their own identities, predicated on notions of religious and national difference from others, especially the Hindus of India – Pakistan's longstanding adversaries.

Thus, the implications of this Foucauldian project for social research are far-reaching. Using the theoretical framework of discourse presents the researcher an emancipatory opportunity by enabling him/her to challenge common sense constructions by exposing their historical and cultural locatedness. Social research, including mine, is no longer concerned with finding out the truth or establishing an authentic version of events. The task is to identify the key discourses and how these articulate with and augment or resist one another. By doing so one might loosen the hold of 'power of truth' from naturalized (read hegemonic) modes of being.

2.6 Social Constructionism – Articulating the Limits of Realism or a Precipitous Slide into Relativism?

As argued in one of the preceding sections, social constructionism offers a serious challenge to realist epistemology. However, this has also proved its Achilles heel and has been used by its detractors (Cruickshank 2011; Slife and Richardson 2011) to dismiss it as a relativist perspective that can lead to unrelenting nihilism. The reasons for this charge against social constructionism are not hard to discern. The perspective questions the idea of fixed, objective reality and what it suggests in its place are a range of accounts or versions of any given aspect of the world that are *constructed*

through language (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Burr, 1995, 2003; Billig et al., 1988; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Shotter, 1993; Hutchings, 1997; Gergen, 1999/2009a, 2009b). Confronted with this plethora of alternatives, how does one choose a specific account, as the familiar 'foundation' of a 'true' or 'real' criteria no longer exists (Burr, 1998)? This can lead to what Burr (1998: 14) calls 'a road to social and personal paralysis'. Slife and Richardson (2011: 334) also criticise social constructionism on the grounds that it renders untenable any basis for establishing a perspective or position 'more valuable than any other'. They argue that 'the practical utility or usefulness of an understanding requires nonarbitrary criteria for what usefulness means, something social constructionism cannot provide' (Slife and Richardson, 2011: 334).

Burr (1998) argues that social constructionism's challenge to a fixed, objective reality and accompanying categories can be seen as presenting a significant obstacle for political and social theory. If there are no concepts and ideas that relate to aspects of the 'real' world then how can we speak of social categories like 'disadvantaged pupils', 'privileged elites', 'terrorists' and 'religious fundamentalists'? For example, in Baluchistan – Pakistan's geographically largest province – for many years, there has been an on-going resistance to the authority of the central government (Alamgir 2012). The groups involved in this resistance are labelled as 'insurgents' and 'rebels' by the Pakistan government but as 'freedom fighters' by people and groups within the province, sympathetic to the cause of Baluch nationalism. If, as social constructionism posits, there is no objective, fixed external reality and all our categories are mere social constructions, how do we decide between these two conflicting accounts of Baluch resistance? I have labelled this type of relativism as ontological relativism because it challenges the objectivity and truth value of the categories or the building blocks of the social world.

The issue of ontological relativism which is the result of constructionism's suggestion that there are only accounts and versions of events and phenomena in the social world without any anchorage in objective fixed reality does indeed pose serious challenge for our conventional understanding of the social world. The issues resulting from this severing of the link, at least of a straightforward, unproblematic kind, between our accounts of the world and categories, events and phenomena in the external world have been frequently highlighted (Ossorio, 1981; Clark, 1984; Shotter, 1993; Burr,

1998; DeLamater & Hyde, 1998; MERTTENS, 1998; Parker, 1998; Edwards, Ashmore & Potter, 2003; Cruickshank, 2011; Horsthemke, 2011; Slife & Richardson, 2011). The case for rejecting the belief in an objective, fixed, external reality, independent of the language used to describe it has been made persuasively by many writers and theorists of a social constructionist orientation (Whorf, 1956; Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Harris, 1981; Ossorio, 1981; Bakhtin, 1986; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Billig et al., 1988; Shotter, 1993; Gergen 1999/2009a, 2009b; Burr 1995, 2003).

I would like to argue that the case for the position that language does not objectively and unproblematically represent the external world is, indeed, a powerful one. To do this, I will use the theory of post ex facto fallacy as presented by Ossorio (Ossorio, 1981; Shotter, 1993). Shotter (1993: 85) drawing on Ossorio (1981) argues that people's unwillingness to let go of the realist ontological clarity and certainty is actually based on and sustained by the 'ex post facto fallacy'. According to Ossorio (1981) our conceptual categories that apparently reflect aspects of the external world are human creation and are historically located. At a given moment in time, a certain object is defined by a group of people in a specific way by choosing one explanation from various other possibilities. The historical and cultural locatedness of such choices, over time, get obviated and the descriptions acquire a *natural* authenticity, which masks their temporal and cultural origins. Ossorio (1981: 7) writes:

The ex post facto explanation is the penultimate form of a certain kind of logical progression, and it has this form: At a given time, T_2 , something happens so that it becomes the case that a certain thing, P , was so at an earlier time T_1 , even though at T_1 it was not already the case that P was so.

For Ossorio (1981) and Shotter (1993) language is a medium par excellence for creating ex post facto fallacies. As a result of this fallacy, people see their linguistic descriptions of the world as having a natural authenticity, anchored in the essential characteristics of the objects as they exist in the external world. Wittgenstein (1953/1958: 103) eloquently pointed to the human inability to get outside our taken for granted ways of conceiving the world:

The ideal, as we think of it, is unshakable. You can never get outside it; you must always turn back. There is no outside; outside you cannot breathe.—

Where does this idea come from? It is like a pair of glasses on our nose through which we see whatever we look at. It never occurs to us to take them off.

Thus, the realists get trapped within a specific intra-linguistic framework and all their arguments against relativists are from within it and, as such, they fall prey to the ex post facto fallacy because their 'non-represented, unconstructed external world is inevitably representational' (Edwards, Ashmore & Potter, 2003: 232) – a state of affairs they are unable to acknowledge. Going back to the issue of Baluch resistance in Pakistan – the problem of treating the members of Baluch nationalist groups either as insurgents or freedom-fighters stems from the fact that people, depending on their political positioning, see their chosen label as having a privileged relationship to reality. They fail to see that these labels rather than representing reality are socially constructed discursive strategies that form part of the wider discourse that they subscribe to and which would have emerged at a specific point in time under certain social conditions and relationships. By not acknowledging the cultural and historical locatedness of these terms, one tends to get trapped in the ex post facto fallacy, which in turns leads to political stalemate and inertia.

Closely related to the ontological relativism, described above, is what is referred to as moral relativism (Burr, 1998; Tännsjö, 2007). Moral relativism stems from the fact that social constructionism allows us to see the social world as comprising accounts and versions, constructed through language, without having any 'real' or 'objective' basis in the external world. This can facilitate in identifying and problematizing oppressive and unjust practices as they are seen as not grounded in objective, privileged reality; however, the situation gets difficult beyond this point because if all that we have are equally valid alternatives how do we privilege any of these over others? This creates, what Burr (1998: 16) refers to as 'frustrating impotence' or what as Gill (1995: 169) and Edwards, Ashmore & Potter (2003: 235) point out as 'moral quietism'. Taking the example of Baluch resistance a step further, if we want to address the issue of violence that this phenomenon has led to in the province, how do we proceed? Do we deal with the people and groups involved in this resistance as insurgents who need to be controlled and suppressed or as 'freedom-fighters' with whom we might start a process of political negotiation and dialogue?

The charge of moral relativism is predicated on social constructionism's not privileging any specific account over other accounts of the world. If a specific state of affairs is oppressive, social constructionism facilitates us in problematizing and challenging it because it recognises it to be based on socially constructed ways of interpreting the world. However, the critics of social constructionism argue that this view limits the potential for social and political activism of the social constructionist project (Burr, 1998; Willig, 1998; Gergen, 2001; Edwards, Ashmore & Potter 2003; Cruickshank, 2011).

Social constructionist writers have defended the charge of social and political impotence levelled against social constructionism (Burr, 1998; Shotter, 1993; Gergen, 2001, 1999/2009a; Edwards, Ashmore & Potter 2003). Potter (2012) and Gergen (2001, 1999/2009a) have argued that realism rather than having a privileged claim to 'truth' is itself a specific *constructed* account. Potter (2012: 19) argues that the realist accounts are rhetorically constructed by 'blurring together the abstract ontological arguments with the everyday tropes of realism talk.' Gergen (2001: 15) argues that both 'realist and constructionist arguments are forms of discourse'. In other words, both are distinct and unique ways of describing the world. Whereas constructionism acknowledges its own ontology which is essentially linguistic, realism mistakenly sees it as physical and essentialist because it gets trapped in the ex post facto fallacy, which prevents realists from realising that their knowledge of the world is representational and does not present a primordial, immutable reality that is untainted by any other influence (Ossorio, 1981; Shotter, 1993). According to Edwards, Ashmore and Potter (2003) this realist fallacy leads to political and moral impotence because rather than looking at oppressive conditions as socially constructed they are conceived as real, structural constraints that bring with them insurmountable social and political inertia. They defend social constructionism because 'the advantage of relativistic notions of reality as rhetoric is that we *can* take positions and argue' (Edwards, Ashmore and Potter, 2003: 236). Edwards, Ashmore and Potter (2003: 235) write:

[Realism] is a familiar kind of argument against change, against action, against open-ended potentiality of any kind . . . Arguably, it is for relativists and constructionists that the good life is to be lived and made, as and in accountable social action including that of social analysis; rather than to be taken as given, ruled out as impossible or, as disengaged objective analysts,

passively observed and recorded. At the very least, realism has no exclusive claim upon the pragmatics of making a better world.

Issues related to ontological as well as moral relativism have significant implications for social research. Cruickshank (2011: 78) argues that social constructionist research is tenable to the extent that it encourages 'scepticism' about privileging any particular account as having a 'positive knowledge claim that may make reference to the truth'. However, beyond this point the social constructionist project encounters an impasse because it finds it difficult to offer a more emancipatory alternative because of its pervasive scepticism (Willig, 1998). Whenever a social constructionist researcher offers an alternative s/he is bound to face an epistemological stalemate. If s/he suggests an alternative, which they might consider to be better, they would be making a covert recourse to a set of normative principles, rendering his/her position as 'crypto-normative' (Cruickshank 2011: 78). Drawing on Merttens (1998), Cruickshank (2011) argues, the other option available to a social constructionist researcher is to offer his/her research project as a story to be interpreted uniquely by individual readers. However, social constructionist research will be of limited value 'if it relied on individuals' subjective meanings and not on any reference to the truth' (Cruickshank 2011: 79).

Thus, carrying out social research from within a social constructionist framework one has to be cognisant of multiplicity of perspectives. However, this should not lead to intellectual paralysis because nothing stops a social constructionist researcher from interpreting the social world. The social constructionist position enables him/her to recognise that their interpretation of the world has no privileged claim to 'truth'; it is but one possible way of looking at the world that is located within the specific social, cultural and temporal circumstances within which the research has been carried out. The gaze of the researcher is also saturated with his/her own personal life story and would inevitably affect the ultimate narrative that emerges from the research.

The critique of social constructionism on the basis that it is a relativistic perspective has some important implications in the context of my research. The first issue is related to the social constructionist position that we have accounts and versions of events rather than absolute truths. Issues related to international conflicts are especially susceptible to competing, often conflicting, claims. If one is researching

using a social constructionist framework then how does one make sense of various explanations and accounts of events in the international domain because, as Burr (1998: 14) posits, one cannot decide which account to prefer because the 'foundation on which to base this is removed'. Secondly, because one is faced with equally valid and legitimate perspectives how does one design a school curriculum in areas like citizenship education and history – what gets included and what gets excluded? We cannot present some perspective/s, howsoever chosen, to the pupils because there would be many other competing and equally valid perspectives. Moreover, what does one do if a pupil or a group of pupils come up with views or positions which are deemed, by the teacher, for some reason, as 'problematic' or 'undesirable'? For example, what does a teacher do if a student airs racist or sexist views? A belief in equal legitimacy and validity of all perspectives erodes the moral ground beneath our feet as educators to challenge a 'problematic' idea.

I would conclude this section by briefly analysing the issues alluded to earlier about citizenship curriculum that is underpinned by a social constructionist epistemology. As mentioned before, social constructionism sits comfortably with what Kelly (2004/2009: 81) refers to as the 'process approach'. In this approach to curriculum planning, arguably, it would be untenable to out-rightly reject pupils' views even if they are considered 'problematic' or 'wrong' by the teacher. However, in this approach the focus gets shifted from 'products or outcomes' to 'intellectual development and cognitive functioning' (Kelly 2004/2009: 83). In this approach to curriculum planning, students are encouraged to engage in a dialogue and debate about contentious and problematic issues, with the teacher facilitating the process. The process model of the curriculum sees 'the individual as an active being' and its 'central concern is with individual empowerment' (Kelly 2004/2009: 84). Nothing prevents the teacher to present a more 'reasonable' or 'balanced' view about a contentious issue. However, this view would not be presented as a privileged take on reality but a contingent and located narrative. The process driven curriculum, arguably, would equip each student to make ethical choices and thereby become 'an autonomous member of a free and genuinely self-governing community' (Kelly, 2004/2009: 217).

Thus, social constructionism does not offer an easy alternative to traditional research and pedagogy. In fact, within a social constructionist framework, both processes

become much more fluid and complex and eschew any 'comfortable', 'neat' and 'final' solutions. However, as discussed above, social constructionist research and pedagogy both offer exciting opportunities for challenging oppressive and unjust social orders and suggesting more emancipatory options for creating the world anew – a world that is dynamic, fluid, unfinished and perpetually in the process of recreating itself.

2.7 Social Constructionism and Discourse – Implications for My Research

In this final section of the chapter, I consider the implications of adopting a theoretical framework comprising social constructionism and Foucauldian discourse for my thesis. Firstly, using the term 'constructing' rather than 'knowing' means that what the participants of research said does not represent the knowledge that they would have internalised from different sources like their social encounters, the media, and the school curricula. Their responses are treated as constructions that are socially, culturally and historically contingent. The fact that they engaged in these conversations in focus group settings as opposed to individual interviews or in their groups of friends would have had a significant effect on their responses. Moreover, the focus groups were facilitated by me, an adult, who would have been constructed as an authority figure, which, in turn, would have affected their talk.

Secondly, adopting a social constructionist perspective means that analyzing what people, for example, the research participants and political leaders, say involves identifying and teasing out various discourses and versions of events they draw upon to construct their arguments. What people say, along with versions of accounts provided by the media, government declarations and policy statements and school textbooks and curricula arise from and contribute to socially constructed and culturally and historically located discourses.

Thirdly, using Foucault's idea of discourse equips me to analyse what the participants said in the context of the key discourses that they may have encountered. What people say is made possible by the discursive formations they inhabit and the discourses they may have had access to. Discourses create and shape the way we perceive 'reality' and give rise to the objects, concepts and categories of our world(s). By using this approach, one is alerted to the fact discourses are selective and operate

by silencing alternative ways of naming, categorizing and constructing other people, events and phenomena of the world.

Finally, one needs to be cognizant of the relativism that emerges from social constructionism and the idea of discourse. Therefore, I acknowledge that the interpretations that I will make and the conclusions that I will draw from this study are contingent and located, significantly affected by the specific circumstances of this research, including the participants' and my own life histories.

Thus, taking with me the emancipatory impulse that my theoretical framework affords and tempered by the acknowledgement of the locatedness of my insights, in the next chapter, I analyse some key discourses that the participants of my research may have drawn upon while speaking about international conflicts.

3 Discourses of International Conflict

In this chapter, I outline and briefly analyse some important discourses related to international conflicts that would potentially have been available to the participants of my research. As discussed in the previous chapter, I have used Foucault's idea of discourse as one of the important theoretical strands in my thesis. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969/1989b), Foucault presents an elaborate conceptual architecture to explain and explicate the notion of discourse. From amongst these, I found the notions of episteme and discursive formation especially useful and have used these to construct a theoretical framework for this chapter. I suggest that the reasons for initiation of, and the processes involved in, the use of violence in international conflicts form a discursive formation. I start this chapter by arguing that the discourses of wars and international conflicts can be seen as originating at different time periods or epistemes and I have identified three distinct epistemes: Medieval Christianity (1st to 14th century), marked by the dominance of natural and Divine law; Modernity (15th to late 20th century) influenced by the Scientific Revolution and the European Enlightenment; the Post-Cold War Period (1991 to present), ushered in as a result of the seismic changes in international geopolitics precipitated by the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequently the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.

The discourses that I analyse in this chapter were widely used within what I have referred to as the Post-Cold War Episteme. However, many of these discourses had their origins in earlier epistemes. For example, the discourse of protecting the innocents as a just cause of war, which can be traced back to Saint Ambrose of Milan, in the 4th century, was also used by President Bush for presenting the 'war on terror' as having just and legitimate cause. I analyse the discourses available to the young people who participated in my study by moving back and forth between these three epistemes. Since my purpose in doing so is to analyse the discourses that would have been available to the research participants, I am not structuring my discussion historically. Doing so would have resulted in repetition because many of the discourses appear in more than one epistemes. Instead, in this chapter, I have organised these discourses in four broad categories – the discourses of just causes of wars or *jus ad*

bellum¹; the discourses of legitimate authority, the nation state and the international order; the discourses of ethical conduct of wars or *jus in bello*¹; and the discourses of terrorism and Islamic terrorism. I do this in order to cover many of the key discourses that were in wide circulation in Pakistan in the first decade of the 21st century and would have potentially been available to the young people who participated in my research. However, it would be pertinent to note that many of these discourses overlap and are closely related to one another and it was difficult to prise them apart and organise them in these broad categories, which, in the final analysis, are arbitrary and ad hoc. In figure 3.2, I give examples of different discourses which would have been potentially available to my research participants and how they relate to the epistemic structure I have outlined above.

3.1 The Discourses of Just Cause of War – Jus ad Bellum

This section will briefly analyse a range of discourses that have been used to justify wars. I have identified these discourses by reviewing the arguments that Western politicians used to justify the ‘war on terror’. The September 11 attacks were a big shock for the US. President Bush was swift in blaming Al-Qaeda for those atrocities and identifying the Taliban regime in Afghanistan as providing a safe haven for them. By declaring that the Taliban were protecting Al-Qaeda, who had attacked US, President Bush, drawing on the discourses of just cause of war, presented the decision to invade Afghanistan as legitimate and justified. He constructed the Afghan invasion as having a just cause because, firstly, its purpose was to redress harm caused to innocent people, secondly, it aimed to punish the perpetrators, who were the wrongdoers, thirdly, it would help fight ‘evil’, and, fourthly, not doing so would have resulted in more attacks in the future. Hence, the invasion constituted self-defence, which made it a just war. These discourses are discussed in subsequent sub-sections. However, these are not the only discourses of just causes of war used around this time.

¹ The Latin terms *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* are of relatively recent origin. Kolb (1997) posits that the terms began appearing formally in literature during the 1930s. However, the ethical principles that these represent can be traced back to ancient Greek and Roman civilizations.

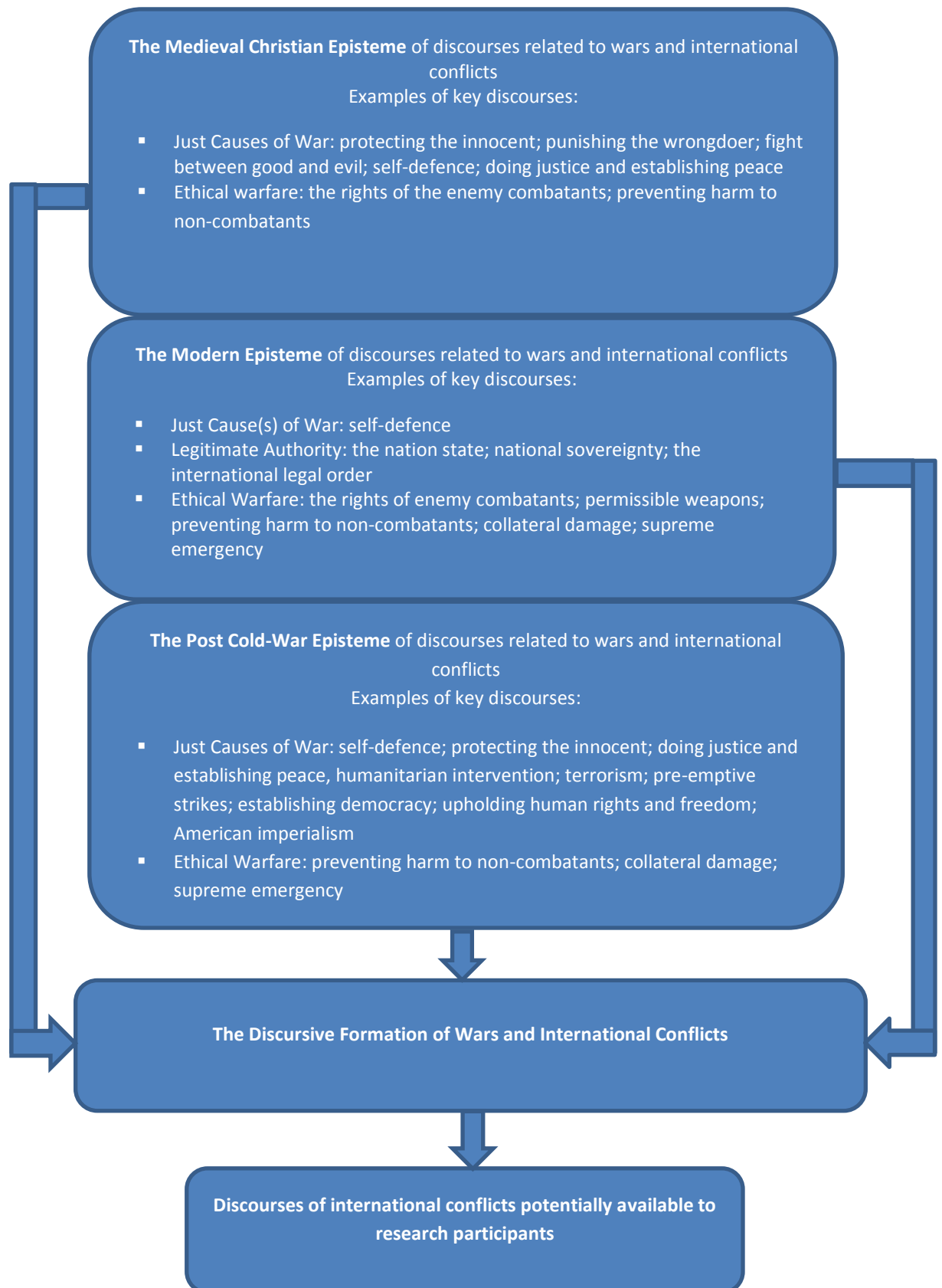


Figure3.2: Epistemes Related to Discourses of International Conflicts

In 2003, President Bush, supported by Prime Minister Blair, as part of the on-going 'war on terror' attacked Iraq without approval from the Security Council. This led to widespread criticism of the 'war on terror' in general and the invasion of Iraq in particular. The Invasion of Iraq was criticised on the grounds that it was not authorised by the legitimate authority – the Security Council. The discourse of legitimate authority comprises another just cause of war. Many people also criticised the invasion of Iraq because, according to them, all other avenues to resolve the issue related to the country's stock of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) had not been exhausted. This criticism of the war drew on the discourse of war as a last resort. Moreover, critics argued that Iraq had not attacked the US and its invasion did not constitute self-defence. In order to justify the Iraq war, President Bush drew on the discourse of pre-emptive strike. Finally, in order to present the invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq as just President Bush also drew on the discourse of humanitarian intervention which included establishing democracy, promoting human rights and upholding freedom. I now briefly analyse each of these discourses of just cause of war in turn.

3.1.1 The Discourse of Protecting the Innocent

President Bush (e.g. 2001a and 2001c) while paving the way for the 'war on terror', constructed the September 11 attacks as driven by an evil ideology bent upon murdering innocent people going about their daily lives. Drawing on the discourse of protecting the innocent, he said that 'the government has a responsibility to protect our citizens' (Bush, 2001b). The discourse of protecting the innocent from harm as a just cause of war has a long history and was first used by Saint Ambrose, the Archbishop of Milan, in the 4th century (Christopher, 2004). This discourse was also used in the Modern Episteme in the writing of the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius about just causes of war (Christopher, 2004) and, subsequently, in the Charter of the United Nations (1945), through its commitment to uphold human rights. In the Post-Cold War Episteme, the discourse to protect the innocent was reinforced during the tenure of Kofi Annan as the Secretary General of the United Nations with the publication of the influential report *The Responsibility to Protect* by The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001).

3.1.2 The Discourse of Punishing the Wrongdoers

President Bush (2001b) in order to justify the 'war on terror' used the discourse of punishing the wrongdoers, whether they were non-state actors or regimes harbouring them:

If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers, themselves. And they will take that lonely path at their own peril. . . The only way to pursue peace is to pursue those who threaten it.

The discourse of punishing wrongdoers can be traced back to the episteme of medieval Christianity. It was Saint Ambrose who used the discourse of punishing the wrongdoers. He cited David who entrusted the task of avenging the murder of his enemy Abner to his own son and, as such, risked his life because for him 'the death of an innocent man should not be left unavenged' (Ambrose, 4th century/2004: book II, Chapter VII, 33). Saint Augustine too used the discourse of punishing the wrongdoers and avenging the wrong done by them (Christopher, 2004). Saint Thomas Aquinas also used the discourse of punishing the wrongdoer as he 'is dangerous to the community . . . [and] it is praiseworthy and wholesome that he be slain . . .' (Aquinas, 13th century/2007: 68). Tony Blair (2001), like President Bush, drew on the discourse of punishing the wrongdoers in the wake of the September 11 attacks, and argued that 'We must bring Bin Laden and other Al Qaida leaders to justice and eliminate the terrorist threat they pose'. Thus, the discourse of punishing wrongdoers was used by both President Bush and Prime Minister Blair to present the 'war on terror' as having a just cause. However, it is interesting to note that this discourse was not frequently drawn on in late Modern Episteme, which was largely defined by the legalist framework that underpinned the charter of the United Nations (O'Driscoll, 2008).

3.1.3 The Discourse of Fight between Good and Evil

Another discourse that President Bush (2002c) used extensively to present the 'war on terror' as having a just cause was that of the fight between good and evil:

There can be no neutrality between justice and cruelty, between the innocent and the guilty. We are in a conflict between good and evil. And America will call evil by its name.

Kellner (2007: 626) argues that President Bush used a 'Manichean discourse to construct an "Evil Other"'. This discourse of a fight between good and evil has its roots in the just war discourses of Medieval Christian Episteme. Saint Augustine maintained that one of the most important just causes of wars was to ensure the triumph of good over evil (Christopher, 2004). For Saint Augustine, there were two types of humans being in the world – those who have been 'granted efficacious grace' and are driven by a love of God and those who are devoid of the efficacious grace and are driven by self-love (Christopher, 2004: 32). This binary division of humanity into good and evil was frequently echoed in President Bush's articulation of the discourses related to the 'war on terror'. The discourse of a fight between good and evil is essentially a discourse of the Medieval Christian Episteme and was rarely drawn upon in the Modern Episteme, which was marked by the dominance of international legal order. O'Driscoll (2008) argues that President Bush and Prime Minister Blair frequently drew on medieval Christian discourses of just war, sidestepping the multilateral, legalist discourses of late modernity, most notably enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations (1945). O'Driscoll (2008: 97-8) writes:

Bush regularly refers to the war on terror in sweeping, moralistic overtones that make recourse to the rhetoric of good and evil and even divine providence.

Thus, the discourse of fighting evil formed an important strand in President Bush's rhetoric on 'war on terrorism', and would have been potentially available to my research participants.

3.1.4 The Discourse of Self-Defence

The next key discourse that President Bush drew on to offer a just cause for his invasions of various countries of the world, as part of the 'war on terror', was that of self-defence. In 2006, he said:

With the twin towers and the Pentagon still smoldering, our country on edge, and a stream of intelligence coming in about potential new attacks, my administration faced immediate challenges. We had to respond to the attack on our country. We had to wage an unprecedented war against an enemy unlike any we had fought before. We had to find the terrorists hiding in

America and across the world before they were able to strike our country again. (Bush, 2006)

The discourse of self-defence as a just cause of war is a very important one and has existed in all three epistemes. In the Medieval Christian Episteme, it was first cited as a just cause of war by Saint Ambrose (4th century/2004:129) who said: 'For courage, which in war preserves one's country from the barbarians, or at home defends the weak, or comrades from robbers, is full of justice . . .'

Like Saint Ambrose, Saint Augustine also approved acts of violence in situations involving self-defence. In the Medieval Christian Episteme, self-defence was seen as a valid cause of war fought either to save the country or other members of the community against aggression, because acts of violence in defence of one's community were driven by the love of God. In contrast, acts of aggression in personal self-defence were not acceptable because they were considered to be driven by self-love (Christopher, 2004).

At the start of the Modern Episteme, Vitoria – considered alongside Hugo Grotius the father of international law – suggested that self-defence constituted a just cause of war (Zapatero, 2009). Grotius (17th century/2001: 19) also drew on the discourse of self-defence and presented it as one of the main just causes of war:

For the preservation of our lives and persons, which is the end of war . . . is most suitable to [those] principles of nature, and to use force, if necessary, for those occasions, is no way dissonant to the principles of nature . . .

Self-defence, indeed, constituted the most important discourse of just cause in the late Modern Episteme and was reflected in the Covenant of the League of Nations (1919/1924) and was subsequently enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations (United Nations, 1945: Article 51). Thus, self-defence was seen as a justifiable reason for a country to fight in the face of aggression perpetrated by another state.

President Bush (2006) drew on the discourse of self-defence, among others, for attacking Afghanistan (Glen, 2009). However, he was using this discourse in a different context, because what he was proposing to do was to attack a country in retaliation for an attack by non-state terrorist agents. The country and its regime had not directly attacked the US. Thus, arguably the invasion of Afghanistan contravened the UN Charter and gave rise to discussions about the legitimacy of this action. For example,

Dorn (2011: 246) remarks that 'the singular focus on defeating terrorists may have received a high mark in and of itself [on the just war criteria], the inclusion of removing a regime [the Taliban] is less just.' Similarly, in the context of invasion of Iraq in 2003, Glen (2009:316) maintains that the principle of self-defence 'was reinterpreted and significantly altered'. Grotius (cited in Dallmayr, 2004: 273) suggested that all acts of war, initiated on the pretext of self-defence needed to be assessed against rigorous criteria in order to 'ward off frivolous abuse of this justification'. Notwithstanding the debates that whether the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq by the US-led coalition were just, the discourse of self-defence is an important one and is stated in the UN Charter as the only justified cause for a nation-state to resort to use of force against another sovereign state, and, as I have shown, President Bush frequently drew on this discourse to present the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq as having a just cause.

3.1.5 The Discourse of War as a Means to do Justice and Establish Peace

In order to present the 'war on terror', initiated in the wake of the September 11 attacks, as a just war, President Bush and Prime Minister Blair both drew on the twin discourses of doing justice and establishing peace. The two discourses were closely linked together in the Medieval Christian Episteme because doing justice, which entailed use of violence in wars, was seen as a means of establishing peace, which Saint Augustine (cited in O'Driscoll, 2008: 94) referred to as *Tranquillitas Ordinas*. President Bush (2001a), while addressing the joint session of the Congress on September 20, 2001, emphasised the need for doing justice and said: 'Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done'. O'Driscoll (2008: 97) argues that this discourse of doing justice has its origin in 'the biblical injunction of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. President Bush in an interview with Woodward (2004: 279) said: 'Going into this period, I was praying for strength to do the Lord's will . . . I pray that I be as good a messenger of His will as possible.'

O'Driscoll (2008: 100) argues that this discourse of vindictive justice goes back to the early Medieval Christian Episteme 'and is ultimately derived from St. Paul's proclamation (Romans 13:4) that the prince (or the state leader) is the minister of God to execute His wrath upon the evildoer'. Saint Ambrose of Milan (cited in Christopher, 2004) considered justice to be one of the highest virtues and constituted a just cause

of war. In the Medieval Christian Episteme doing justice by punishing the wrongdoers was seen as the means of establishing peace of earth. And President Bush often drew on these twin discourses and portrayed the 'war on terror' as a vehicle for carrying out vindictive justice to establish peace in the US and the wider world. In a press conference in 2002, he said:

There should be no doubt in anybody's mind, this man [Saddam Hussein] is thumbing his nose at the world, that he has gassed his own people, that he is trouble in his neighborhood, that he desires weapons of mass destruction. I will use all the latest intelligence to make informed decisions about how best to keep the world at peace, how best to defend freedom for the long run.

(Bush, 2002a)

The discourse of creating peace, not just for the US, but, for the region and ultimately the whole world, constructed a moral burden for his office, and created a moral imperative for him to respond urgently to. In order to present the 'war on terror' as just, President Bush drew directly on the Medieval Christian Episteme's discourse of establishing peace in *civitas terrena* – the earthly abode of humans. It is interesting to juxtapose President Bush's discourse of establishing peace with what Saint Augustine (4/5th century/1887: 377) wrote:

A great deal depends on the causes for which men undertake wars, and on the authority they have for doing so; the natural order which seeks the peace of mankind, ordains that the monarch should have the power of undertaking war if he thinks it advisable . . .

As the above excerpts illustrate and as discussed in an earlier section, President Bush's rhetoric on 'war on terror' drew significantly on the discourses of just wars of Medieval Christian Episteme (O'Driscoll, 2008: 98).

3.1.6 The Discourse of War as the Last Resort

The 2003 invasion of Iraq by the 'coalition of the willing' (Enemark & Michaelsen, 2005: 546) led by the US was criticised by people by who drew on the discourse of war as the last resort. When President Bush and Prime Minister Blair decided to invade Iraq in 2003, the UN weapons inspectors were still in the country and they were not given a chance to complete their work. Enemark & Michaelsen (2005: 561) write:

At a Security Council briefing two weeks prior to the invasion [of Iraq], chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix pleaded for “a few more months” to complete the inspectors’ mission and bring about a peaceful resolution of the stand-off with Iraq.

Within the modern discourses of just causes of war there is a presumption that peace is a desirable and normal state of affairs in the international arena. This presumption is reflected in the discourse of war as the last resort which entails that even if all other just causes of war exist, resort to violence should be made only if all other avenues for peaceful resolution of pending issues have been exhausted and found ineffective (Enemark & Michaelsen, 2005). This discourse of war as the last resort did not exist *per se* in the Medieval Christian Episteme. We get only a tangential reference to it in the discourse of the necessity to declare wars in advance of the initiation of actual hostilities in the writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Christopher, 2004). The implications of this discourse are that ‘the very act of declaration invites the second party to the pending hostilities the opportunity to offer redress in lieu of war’ (Christopher, 2004: 51).

The discourse of war as the last resort was alluded to by Vitoria, writing at the threshold of the Modern Episteme, in his three canons of war (cited in Christopher, 2004: 58). He maintained ‘only under compulsion and reluctantly should he [the prince] come to the necessity of war’. Thus, in Vitoria’s view, for a war to be just, it had to be initiated after careful deliberation and once all other options for peaceful resolution of the issues had failed.

Grotius too, writing in the early Modern Episteme, used the discourse of war as the last resort. For Grotius (17th century/2001: 234-5), war was an action of such ‘weighty magnitude’ that all peaceful options must be first tried and wherever possible one must ‘incline in favour of peace’. He suggested that belligerent parties should try to avoid violence by exploring the methods of conference, compromise, fortune and single combat. Only once all these avenues had been exhausted and found of no use, should they choose the option of war.

This discourse of war as the last resort was a key tenet of The Covenant of League of Nations (The League of Nations, 1919/1924) and became enshrined in International Law in the Charter of the UN (United Nations, 1945: Article 2: 3):

All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.

Thus, the discourse of war as the last resort was the key discourse in the Modern Episteme, especially the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, when the 'coalition of the willing' invaded Iraq, without waiting for all options to be exhausted, especially before the publication of the report of the UN weapons inspectors, it led to widespread criticism of their actions and the critics were primarily drawing on the discourse of war as the last resort. From my own experience of living in Pakistan at that time, I know that this discourse was in wide circulation there.

3.1.7 The Discourse of Preventive Attack

In 2003, the 'coalition of the willing' (Enemark & Michaelsen, 2005: 546) led by the US attacked Iraq. One of the main reasons that President Bush (2003) cited for attacking the country was its regime's capability to inflict serious harm to American interests:

Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised . . . The danger is clear . . . The United States of America has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security. That duty falls to me, as Commander-in-Chief, by the oath I have sworn, by the oath I will keep.

According to President Bush (2003) and Prime Minister Blair (2003), the main reason for invading Iraq, even without Security Council approval, was the possession of WMD by Saddam's regime and the potential threat these posed to the US and Western interests generally. However, the Iraqi regime had not carried out any act of aggression against US. Hence, the US strikes against the regime constituted preventive self-defence (Kastenberg, 2004). The discourse of preventive attacks also underpinned *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (The White House, 2002: 15):

The United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today's threats, and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our

adversaries' choice of weapons, do not permit that option. We cannot let our enemies strike first.

Although the discourse of preventive attacks did not exist per se in the Medieval Christian Episteme, non-retaliatory acts of violence were not necessarily seen as unjust. For Saint Thomas Aquinas, the war carried out by a Christian ruler represented Divine will. The ruler could, if he deemed appropriate, wage a war to 'achieve peace' on earth (Christopher, 2004: 36). Thus, rather than being contingent on objective criteria, wars 'become just based on the command of the ruler' (Christopher, 2004: 37). President Bush's rhetoric of his duty as the commander-in-chief of the American army was reminiscent of the Divine duty of the ruler posited by Saint Thomas Aquinas, which included preventatively punishing the reprobate in order to establish peace on earth (Christopher, 2004). Thus, the discourse of establishing peace of the Medieval Christian Episteme could be used to justify preventative strikes and was used by President Bush while justifying the decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

At the beginning of the Modern Episteme, Vitoria posited that offensive as well as defensive wars could be just. For Vitoria (Kinsella and Carr, 2007: 56), just causes of war could include:

. . . avenging previous injustices, punishing wrongdoers, and protecting themselves [states] against tyrants who might otherwise threaten them with impunity.

President Bush's discourse of punishing Saddam Hussein, who, he claimed, had amassed and was concealing a stockpile of WMD chimes with Vitoria's discourse of offensive wars against tyrants who could potentially pose a threat to the invading state.

Unlike Vitoria, Grotius did not posit prevention of possible future harm as a just cause of war. He (Grotius, 17th century/2007: 82-3) dismissed the premise of preventive war:

. . . to maintain that the bare probability of some remote, or future annoyance from a neighbouring state affords a just ground of hostile aggression, is a doctrine repugnant to every principle of equity.

Generally speaking in the Modern Episteme, the discourse of preventive attacks was not widely used and does not figure either in the Covenant of the League of Nations

(The League of Nations, 1919/1924) or the Charter of the United Nations (1945). Notwithstanding the absence of the discourse of preventive attacks in modern international law, Delahunty and Yoo (2009) argue that this discourse had been quite common in the statements of senior US politicians throughout the 20th century. They write (Delahunty & Yoo, 2009: 853):

A succession of twentieth-century American Presidents also announced “doctrines” of preventive intervention. These included Theodore Roosevelt (through Secretary of State Henry Stimson), Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan.

However, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, predicated on a discourse of preventive attacks, was widely criticised across the world because in the international law there is no provision to attack a sovereign state on the basis of the possibility of future harm that it might inflict on the invading state. From my own experience, I am aware that the discourse of preventive attacks adopted by the US establishment in the wake of September 11 attacks was widely criticised in Pakistan.

3.1.8 The Discourse of Promoting Democracy

In addition to the discourse of preventive attack, discussed in the previous section, another discourse that both President Bush and Prime Minister Blair used, especially in the context of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, was that of promoting democracy in failed states controlled by autocratic regimes (Monten, 2005; Chomsky, 2006; Acharya, 2007). Monten (2005: 112) writes:

The promotion of democracy is central to the George W. Bush administration’s prosecution of both the war on terrorism and its overall grand strategy, in which it is assumed that U.S. political and security interests are advanced by the spread of liberal political institutions and values abroad.

The National Security Strategy of the US (The White House 2002: Introduction by President George W Bush), commonly known as the Bush Doctrine, made promotion of democracy a key strand of the wider ‘war on terror’ by ‘actively work[ing] to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world’.

The discourse of promoting democracy did not exist in the Medieval Christian Episteme. This discourse emerged in the Modern Episteme, almost exclusively, as part of the discourse of US 'liberal exceptionalism' – a discourse that posits the US as a unique political project committed to, besides other things, 'long-term promotion of democratic change' (Monten, 2005:113). However, it was only in the Post-Cold War Episteme that the discourse of promoting democracy acquired an explicitly central position in the US foreign policy and was used to justify the invasion of Iraq and the wider 'war on terror'. Notwithstanding President Bush and Prime Minister Blair's rhetoric of bringing democracy to the peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq, these invasions were criticised by ordinary people and scholars (e.g. Leaman, 2004; Chomsky, 2006; Mazari, 2008a; Acharya, 2007) on the grounds that these were carried out for ulterior purposes. This will be discussed in greater detail in later sections.

3.1.9 Discussion – Discourses of Just Causes of War or Jus ad Bellum

In this section, I have discussed some discourses of just causes of war which were drawn upon by key Western politicians, as well as their critics, to justify and criticise, respectively, the 'war on terror'. However, many wars have been fought in the world which could not be justified by drawing on any of these discourses. For example, many international conflicts, especially colonial exploits, were driven by economic interests. De Sousa (2008: 61) writes:

Modern colonialism was grounded in economic exploitation: a central reason for establishing colonial rule was that the colonies would supply raw materials to and provide captive markets for the metropolitan center.

However, in none of the three epistemes of international conflicts, posited in this thesis, one finds discourses that justify wars fought for economic gain or advantage. Notwithstanding the underlying economic interest, the legitimacy of imperial expansions was often argued by using the discourses of bringing civilization, education and development to the colonized people. Many writers (e.g. Ferguson, 2004; Flint & Falah, 2004; Leaman, 2004; Chomsky, 2006; Adriaenssens & Baker, 2012) have suggested that the US in the 20th century has acted as an imperial power and many international conflicts in which it has had a stake were actually driven by economic interests. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in a later section. Flint and Falah (2004: 1380-1) argue that the members of the US establishment used the

discourses of just causes of war as a façade for many of the country's foreign exploits because:

If the hegemonic power is unable to demonstrate such justness then its extra-territoriality risks being perceived as an imperial project, which is in itself a rejection of the accepted just interaction of sovereign states.

Thus, pursuing economic interests does not constitute a discourse of just cause for using violence in the international arena.

Another contentious motivation for use of violence relates to furthering and imposing a religious ideology. As I have discussed earlier, the Medieval Christian Episteme was replete with discourses of just war that were predicated on religious precepts and ideology. For example, in the Medieval Christian Episteme, one set of wars that were fought expressly for religious purposes comprised the crusades initiated by Pope Urban II in 1095 (Chevedden, 2013). Similarly, in the Medieval Episteme various Muslim rulers from amongst the Rashidun caliphs and the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, fought wars that were driven by a desire to expand the outreach of the religion and extend the frontiers of the Islamic Empire (Eamonn, 2011). However, not many of the wars fought in this period were driven by a desire for expansion of religion per se (Sorensen, 2013).

In contrast to the above, in the Modern Episteme one hardly finds any discourses of just wars that had religious bases. An exception to this general trend was the discourse of converting the heathens to Christianity that at times was used as one of the reasons for colonizing countries in Asia and Africa. The main reason for the absence of discourses with religious bases in the Modern Episteme was that this period coincided with the emergence of the international system that was based on a secular world-view. This will be discussed in greater detail in one of the later sections.

In the Post-Cold War Episteme, religious discourses related to use of violence in national and international affairs emerged with a force never seen before (Haynes, 2007/2013). This was especially true in the context of rise of Islamic militancy in the last decade of the 20th century that reached its climax in the September 11 attacks on the US in 2001. Whether the main Islamic militant groups profess and aim to resort to violence against other sovereign states to enforce their own religious ideologies on them is a moot point. Soherwordi, Ashraf and Khattak (2012) argue that the Afghan

Taliban have been mainly driven by a desire to purge the Pashtun society of corruption and violence that took hold of Afghanistan as a result of the conflicts that broke out between local warlords after the Soviet withdrawal in 1988. Their narrow and rigid interpretation of Islam and its enforcement were confined to the Pashtun areas. Similarly, the main aim of Al-Qaeda after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, according to Burke (cited in Soherwordi, Ashraf and Khattak, 2012: 350), was to create a force for 'defending Muslims from oppression'. It can be argued that religion, at best, forms only *one* of the reasons for the actions of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, as many of their demands are of a political rather than religious nature. Thus, even in the Post-Cold War Episteme in which there has been marked by a resurgence of religious discourses in international politics, discourses that justify wars fought for imposing religious ideologies on the followers of other religions in foreign territories are rare. Even if the belligerent party has a religious motive or is driven by a strong religious ideology, as in the case of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, they tend to, at least partly, draw on secular political discourses to make their case more acceptable and appealing to the wider world.

This section, then, has shown that those initiating wars have drawn on a wide range of discourses to establish their legitimacy. However it has been widely argued that in many cases these discourses have been used to conceal other motivations which were less just or 'legitimate'. Another key aspect of discourses of just cause of war is the legitimacy of the authority initiating the war. The next section deals with this.

3.2 The Discourses of the Legitimate Authority – the Nation State and the International System

In this section, I consider the authorities that can declare a legitimate war – that is, nation states and international organisations. Thus, I begin by briefly outlining socio-political circumstances, which, at the beginning of the Modern Episteme, led to emergence of the notion of the nation-state and the accompanying international order. I then analyse the discourse of national sovereignty which lies at the very core of the ideas of the nation-state and the international system. Next, I discuss the discourse of international legal order that began emerging with the creation of the system of sovereign nation-states and got consolidated with the birth of international law and supranational organisations such as the United Nations around the middle of

the 20th century. After this, I consider various characteristics of modern nation states which are related to the causes of and justifications for recent international conflicts. I discuss two contrasting discourses – the discourse of secular nationalism and the discourse of religion in national and international politics. I conclude this section with a brief analysis of the discourse of American Imperialism which has posed significant challenges for national sovereignty of individual nation-states and the supremacy of the system of international law predicated on a network of supranational organisations.

3.2.1 The Discourse of the Nation State and National Sovereignty

The discourse of a nation-state, as we understand it today, did not exist in all periods of history (Devetak, 2012). The discourse of a nation state, in its current form, emerged in the Modern Episteme and is crucial for understanding the complex economy of discourses and discursive practices related to international conflicts. Tilly (1985: 170) defines a nation-state as a collection of:

. . . relatively centralized, differentiated organizations the officials of which more or less successfully claim control over the chief concentrated means of violence within a population inhabiting a large, contiguous territory.

During the Middle Ages, the situation was, however, quite different. State power in Europe was distributed and contested amongst a number of individuals and institutions including the kings, princes, the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. According to Devetak (2012: 137), during that period, Europe ‘looked like a patchwork quilt of overlapping and intersecting layers of power, authority and allegiance’. The relationship between political power and geographical territory was not as clear cut and well-defined as is the case in modern nation states. This lack of a clear centre of power and authority partly explains the frequent, almost incessant, conflicts that ravaged medieval Europe. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 marked the end of the Thirty Years War in Europe – the longest running large scale conflict in recent times (Mingst, 2008). The Treaty of Westphalia, thus, became a defining moment in world politics that heralded the emergence of important political discourses that we have come to associate with idea of the modern nation state. A key discourse that emerged from the Treaty of Westphalia was that of national sovereignty, which located the right to the use of force within a given geographical territory, almost exclusively, in the

person of the monarch or the secular ruler. This discourse also constructed the monarch or the sovereign ruler as the legitimate authority who could declare war on another nation, under certain circumstances. Thus, discourse of national sovereignty is central to understanding the dynamics of international conflicts in the context of my research and is discussed in greater detail in the next sub-section.

When I carried out the fieldwork for my research, the discourse of national sovereignty was widely used in Pakistan. Many Pakistanis felt that as a result of joining the 'war on terror', the government of Pakistan had ceded a significant part of its sovereignty to the US. Mazari (2009g: no page number) a well-known international relations scholar and writer in a newspaper article demanded that:

If the credibility of the government and the establishment is to be re-established, they [the ruling party] must first come clean on the extent of the sovereignty already surrendered to the US. Then they must delink from the US and claim back the lost sovereignty before it is too late.

Drone attacks in the tribal regions of Pakistan, which the US government claimed were targeted against terrorists hiding in the area, were seen by many Pakistanis as unfair and as an invasion of Pakistan's national sovereignty. As discussed earlier, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 by the US, without Security Council approval, was also discussed very often at that time and was cited as another instance of the violation of a country's sovereignty by the US. Thus, many actions taken by the US government after the September 11 attacks were criticised by Pakistanis, drawing on the discourse of national sovereignty.

The discourse of national sovereignty per se did not exist in the Medieval Christian Episteme. It can be traced back to the early part of the Modern Episteme in the *Six Books on the Commonwealth* by Jean Bodin, a 16th century French political philosopher. Bodin (1576/1967: 25) defines sovereignty as the 'absolute and perpetual power vested in a commonwealth'. He goes on to say that sovereignty is:

. . . the distinguishing mark of the sovereign that he cannot in any way be subject to the commands of another, for it is he who makes law for the subject, abrogates law already made, and amends obsolete law. No one who is subject either to the law or to some other person can do this.

Hobbes, a 17th century English philosopher, further developed the discourse of sovereignty in his book the *Leviathan* (1651), where we get the first glimpse of the discourse of national sovereignty as we understand it today. He maintained that before the formation of the state, human beings existed in a state of anarchy. In order to create civic order and peace every member of society makes a covenant with every other member, whereby each one of them gives up the right of self-governing in favour of one person or group people who are invested, by popular will, with 'so much power and strength' that 'by terror thereof, he is enabled to form the wills of them all, to peace at home, and mutual aid against their enemies abroad' (Hobbes, 1651: 106). This contract amongst the members of the 'Commonwealth' thus creates the person of sovereign. Thus, according to Hobbes, the discourse of state sovereignty posits it as a contract amongst individual people and the state, usually represented by the person of the sovereign, which for Hobbes (1651: 106) is the 'mortal god to which we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and defence'. For Hobbes (1651: 106):

...sovereignty [includes] the right of making war and peace with other nations and Commonwealths; that is to say, of judging when it is for the public good, and how great forces are to be assembled, armed, and paid for that end, and to levy money upon the subjects to defray the expenses thereof.

Thus, for Hobbes sovereignty not only entailed unfettered power within the dominion but it also conferred on the person of sovereign the right to judge when it was prudent and right to declare war on another commonwealth or geographical dominion.

The discourse of national sovereignty, which emerged in the wake of the Treaty of Westphalia, located the control of a specific geographical territory in the person of the monarch and vested in him exclusively the right to use violence within his given geographical dominion. This right is referred to as autonomy and is predicated on the principle of non-interference by any external agent (Krasner, 1995). Therefore, sovereign authority and territorial control became coterminous in the discourse of national sovereignty, which has become the *sine qua non* of the modern state (Devetak, 2012).

The discourse of national sovereignty forms an important component of the Charter of the United Nations (1945). Article 2 of the Charter states: 'The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.' The discourse of national

sovereignty entails that every member state of the United Nations will be considered fully competent and independent to deal with issues internal to its geographical borders (Krasner, 1995; Cohan, 2006; Acharya, 2007; Mingst, 2008; Devetak, 2012, United Nations, 1945). Any intrusion into the internal affairs of the state by another state is considered a violation of its national sovereignty. Thus, the discourse of national sovereignty and its violation by US under the pretext of 'war on terror' were highly topical in Pakistan when I carried out the fieldwork for my study and, as such, would potentially have been available to the young people who participated in my study.

3.2.2 The Discourse of International Legal Order

The previous section has shown that leader of each nation state has the legitimate authority to declare war on another state. However, this authority has been to some extent curtailed by international agreements. This section discusses the discourse of international legal order. The international legal order, that characterised the Modern Episteme, began to emerge in the wake of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and was marked by discourses of autonomy, territorial integrity, non-intervention and national sovereignty of individual states and focused on their relationship with other sovereign states (Devetak, 2012; Rothwell, 2012). Rothwell (2012: 232) writes:

From the seventeenth century onwards international law continued to develop with a principal focus upon the core relationships that at the time existed between states such as trade and commerce, boundaries and territoriality, war and peace.

However, this early system of international law based on the Westphalian discourses did not prove sufficient to prevent states from attacking each other. The horrors of the First World War led many world leaders to think about creating an international system that might prove effective in preventing similar international conflicts in the future. This desire led to the creation of the The League of Nations in 1920 (Rothwell, 2012). The most significant development in the system of international law occurred with the creation of the United Nations in 1945. Because the formation of the United Nations was a direct response to the atrocities of the two World Wars, its Charter emphasises the organisation's role in arbitrating disputes between sovereign states, according to international law:

The Purposes of the United Nations are:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of peace.

(United Nations, 1945: Article 1)

Thus, the discourse of international legal order, enshrined most pre-eminently in the Charter of the United Nations is a very important one. As discussed in the previous sub-section many critics of the 'war on terror', especially the invasion of Iraq in 2003, drew on the discourse of international legal order that confers the status of legitimate authority for declaring wars on the Security Council of the United Nations. I have found, from my experience of living in both countries, that the discourse of international legal order is more widely used in Pakistan than in England. This is because the United Nations occupies a special place in the Pakistani imagination. The reason for this is that the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution to resolve the longstanding Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India through a plebiscite – an option much favoured by Pakistan and opposed by India because of its expected likely outcome. School textbooks and popular media often refer to this resolution by drawing on the discourse of international legal order, which posits the UN as the supreme arbiter of international disputes.

3.2.3 The Discourse of Legitimate Authority

The previous sections have shown that both the nation state and the international order, symbolised by the UN, can be seen as legitimate authorities for declaring initiating international hostilities. This section further discusses the tension between the two. On March 20, 2003 the US and UK launched an attack on Iraq because of its failure to comply 'fully' with the demands of the Security Council to destroy its stockpile of chemical and biological weapons. This invasion led to widespread criticism because it was carried out without a mandate from the Security Council (Glen, 2009). This criticism was predicated on the international consensual discourse of circumscribed, legalist justum bellum that underpinned the Charter of the United

Nations. The Charter of the United Nations acted as a constraint on Westphalian sovereignty by appropriating for the Security Council the role of the legitimate authority that could approve and initiate the use of force against a sovereign member state. However, in the wake of the September 11 attacks, the US adopted the discourse of unilateralism instead of multilateralism, whereby it appropriated the right to act on its own if it deemed necessary for its strategic national interests (Glen, 2009). The 20th century saw the emergence and consolidation of the discourse of multilateralism in international politics whereby the UN Security Council and earlier the Council of the League of Nations constituted the legitimate authority to approve the declaration and initiation of the use of force against a sovereign member state:

. . . the concept of legitimate authority has traditionally been tied to the principle of state sovereignty, the founding of the United Nations altered this relationship with regard to war. By signing the Charter, states agreed that they will seek and obtain Security Council authorization before initiating conflict, notwithstanding the self-defense exception. (Glen, 2009: 317)

Thus, the unilateral decision by the US, supported by the UK, to attack Iraq came as a shock to many and was widely criticised (Glen, 2009). The critics of the Iraq war drew on the discourse of legitimate authority, which, as discussed above, was vested in the Security Council. Since the US and UK failed to get an approval from the Security Council, many people argued that their actions constituted an unjust invasion of a sovereign state.

The discourse of legitimate authority goes back to the Medieval Christian Episteme. According to Saint Augustine, wars represented the Divine will and were fought to subdue human hubris and pride (Christopher, 2004). Since, the ruler was ordained by God to bring order and peace in the world, a war initiated by him ipso facto became a just war. Saint Thomas Aquinas also suggested that the ruler constituted the legitimate authority to declare war (Christopher, 2004). President Bush very often drew on religious discourses of just war, avoiding recourse to the international legal order of the Modern Episteme and his rhetoric in the context of the 'war on terror' often had a moral tenor and seldom displayed any compunction about overriding international law (O'Driscoll, 2008). Addressing the American people, on March 18, 2003, he (Bush, 2003) said: 'The United Nations Security Council has not lived up to its responsibilities,

so we will rise to ours.’ Thus, the discourse of legitimate authority was an important one in the context of the ‘war on terror’. President Bush in his speeches and *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (The White House, 2002), appropriated the authority to declare war to the office of the president of the United States in situations that involved threat to the country. However, the detractors of the ‘war on terror’, especially in the context of the invasion of Iraq, also drew on the discourse of legitimate authority to portray the invasion of Iraq as illegal and unjust.

The tensions and debates about who or what constitutes a legitimate authority were in wide circulation during the period when I collected my data.

3.2.4 The Discourse of Secular Nationalism

The key discourses in national and international politics during the Modern Episteme had secular bases and orientations. However, the Post-Cold War Episteme saw an unprecedented resurgence of religious discourses in national and international politics. In this section and the next, I briefly analyse these two discourses. During the Modern Episteme, the discourse of secular nationalism was the dominant one. This discourse had a profound impact on the nature of international conflicts. Very few wars and international conflicts during this episteme were driven by religious reasons. The discourse of secular nationalism has a long history. The political developments that led to the emergence of the modern nation state approximately coincided with the Scientific Revolution and the European Enlightenment both of which made Western European societies increasingly secular. The Treaty of Westphalia gave the secular ruler, rather than the pope or the Church, absolute authority over affairs within his geographical dominion (Mingst, 2008; Devetak, 2012). Thus, the very origin of the notion of the nation state was the result of various processes that were essentially secular. Shah and Philpott (2011) argue that the discourse of political secularism can be traced as far back as the European Reformation and the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. The latter was an emblematic moment that resulted in a gradual shift in the locus of temporal power from the church to the prince and was summed up by the principle ‘*cuius regio, eius religio*’ (Shah and Philpott 2011: 31) which may be translated as ‘whose realm, his religion’.

The discourse of secular nationalism was further augmented during the French Revolution of 1789 when ‘Rousseau and his Jacobin acolytes openly identified the

church and Christianity as implacably hostile to any free and flourishing republic' (Shah & Philpott, 2011: 38). Thus, one of the defining features of the Modern Episteme was the belief that public affairs should largely be decided by a popular consensus rather than by referring to a religious authority. Discussing the growing influence of secularism on national and international politics in the post-Westphalian world, Shah and Philpott (2011: 37) write:

From the late eighteenth century to the late twentieth century, political secularism continued its dramatic global expansion...the form of secularism that continued to build with great momentum during this period was the doctrine, reflected in thought and practice, that the state should actively subordinate religious authority to political authority, religious institutions to political institutions, and religious claims to political claims, all in the interest of promoting the wellbeing of society.

The discourse of secular nationalism did not remain confined to Europe. During the 19th century, some of the emerging secular powers of Western Europe went to colonise extensive parts of non-European world. These imperial powers spread the powerful idea of 'secular nationalism...to the newly colonized areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America as part of the ideological freight of colonialism' (Juergensmeyer 2008: 15). In 1917, the Bolshevik revolution resulted in the powerful apparatus of the Soviet state to subsume the Russian Orthodox Church within it. In the 20th century when many countries of Africa and Asia gained independence from colonial rule, their rulers enthusiastically continued with the discourse of secular nationalism as the defining characteristic of the nascent political systems in these countries. Some parts of the developing world where the discourse gained ascendancy and the states subjugated or controlled religion included Turkey, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia (Shah & Philpott 2011) and Pakistan. In Turkey, the Ottoman Empire ended and Kamal Atatürk replaced the Caliphate with a defiantly secular system of governance. In Egypt, Gamel Abdel Nasser, after unsuccessfully wooing the Muslim Brotherhood, tried to break its popular support, by drawing on discourse of the nation state as secular, and the process culminated in the execution of its leader Sayyid Qutb (Juergensmeyer, 2008; Shah & Philpott, 2011).

In India, Jawaharlal Nehru, influenced by the discourse of nation state as secular, envisioned the newly independent Indian state along aggressively secular lines. His western education, the trauma of the assassination of his inspirational mentor Mohandas Gandhi by a right wing Hindu fundamentalist and his own opposition to the partition of India along religious lines were the important factors that contributed to Nehru's commitment to the discourse of political secularism.

The discourse of nation state as secular was dominant in Pakistan, too, during the first twenty years of its existence as an independent country. The case of Pakistan is quite a unique one as it is one of the only two countries in the world that have been created on the basis of a religious ideology – the other being the state of Israel. The creation of a separate country for Indian Muslims was spearheaded by Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Like Gandhi and Nehru, Jinnah studied in Britain and trained as a barrister from the Lincoln's Inn. On return from London, Jinnah started practising as a barrister and entered politics by becoming a member of the Indian National Congress. Notwithstanding leading the political movement for a separate homeland for Muslims, Jinnah was a man of thoroughly secular thinking. Whereas Jinnah passionately believed in the cause of a separate homeland for Indian Muslims, he never envisioned the new state of Pakistan as a theocracy (Ahmad, 1994). Drawing on the discourse of nation state as secular, he envisioned Pakistan as a secular democracy. In his Presidential address to the First Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, Jinnah (1947) was clearly drawing on the discourse of the nation state as secular when he declared:

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed -- that has nothing to do with the business of the State . . . you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus, and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.

The discourse of the nation state as secular continued to hold sway during the governments of Field Marshal Ayub Khan (1958 – 1969) and General Yahya Khan (1969 1971). The 1971 elections installed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as first civilian president and subsequently the fourth prime minister of Pakistan. Bhutto, like many of his

predecessors, was not a religious man and was enthused by a leftist-socialist vision of politics; he once famously admitted drinking alcohol in a public rally (Kalasha, 2012). Thus, the discourse of the nation state as secular remained the dominant one in Pakistan until 1977, when Bhutto was deposed through a military coup d'état by General Zia-ul-Haq.

3.2.5 The Discourse of Religion in National and International Politics

Notwithstanding the tide of secular nationalism that swept the world in the Modern Episteme discussed in the preceding two sub-sections, the discourse of religion in national and international politics surfaced with an unprecedented force in the Post-Cold War Episteme and captured popular consciousness when iconic US targets were attacked on September 11, 2001 (Juergensmeyer, 2008; Shah & Philpott, 2011; Snyder, 2011). The emergence of this discourse has been hailed by international relations scholars (e.g. Juergensmeyer, 2008; Shah & Philpott, 2011; Snyder, 2011, Haynes, 2007/2013) as a major challenge to the hegemonic discourse of secular nationalism that defined national and international politics in the Modern Episteme.

Juergensmeyer (2008: 18) argues that the discourse of religion offers a social and political framework that is comparable and similar to secular nationalism in terms of its existential function and coverage of 'civic values'. He argues that the discourse of secular nationalism offers a kind of ontological anchor that 'locates an individual within the universe' (Juergensmeyer, 2008: 20). As such secular nationalism fulfils the human need for belonging to something greater than his/her own self. He posits that this discourse also legitimises the exercise of power and ultimately locates it in the construct of national sovereignty. The religious discourse also operates at both these levels. Firstly, it offers its followers a transcendental system of values and identity. Secondly, it posits a legitimate system for the exercise of power which has a divine source but mortal agents of execution.

As discussed above, the Western discourse of secular nationalism was adopted enthusiastically by the nascent nation states of Asia and Africa around the middle of 20th century. However, in many of these countries the alternative discourse of religion began to emerge and challenge the discourse of secular nationalism in the latter half of the 20th century (Juergensmeyer, 2008; Shah & Philpott, 2011; Snyder, 2011). Various reasons have been cited for the emergence of this discourse of which I will

briefly outline only two. Firstly, many people of these third world countries saw the discourse of secular nationalism as 'a mask for a certain form of European Christian Culture' (Juergensmeyer, 2008: 26). It has been argued that the notion of secularism is essentially a Christian one (Leeuwen, 1964; Juergensmeyer, 2008). Secondly, the failure of secular regimes in many of these countries left people, especially from the disenfranchised classes, looking for alternatives and 'has become a banner for movements demanding more responsive governments' (Snyder, 2011: 3).

This search for alternatives occurred in many countries of the world, not least in the Islamic World. For example, in Egypt, successive secular governments have had to grapple with the challenge posed by Islamic Brotherhood. In India, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Sikh uprising have posed major challenges to the secular Indian National Congress. The Iranian revolution of 1979 became a major embarrassment and perpetual headache for the Western World, especially the US, which is seen by many in the Islamic World as the source of secular nationalism. The installation of the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 1996 became an example of a theocratic state, which rejected virtually every aspect of the discourse of secular nationalism. Finally, in Pakistan even though a religious party never even came close to winning a national election, successive secular civil and military governments have appeased the orthodox religious groups. And now the country is haunted by its own brand of Taliban that demand the establishment of a theocracy.

Arguably, the discourse of secular nationalism is still the most dominant one in national and international politics in the vast majority of the world. However, the discourse of religion in national and international politics that emerged in the latter half of the 20th century has challenged the undisputed hegemony of secular nationalism in many parts of the world. This challenge is, indeed, a serious one because 'every major religion is far older than the modern nation state and is based on a legitimacy claim far more encompassing than the state (Shah and Philpott, 2011: 51).' The international conflicts in the 21st century, especially the ones purportedly driven by religious ideologies cannot be fully comprehended without analysing the discourses of secular nationalism and religion in national and international politics. Moreover, even in secular states leaders such as President Bush and Prime Minister Blair increasingly called on religious discourses to justify the 'war on terror'.

3.2.6 The Discourse of Hierarchy of Nation States

As I have shown in an earlier section, the discourse of sovereignty of the nation state is an important one in relation to international conflicts. When the United Nations was created in 1945 it was driven by an egalitarian vision for the community of nations. The Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations (United Nations, 1945) states that ‘The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.’

However, it is also important to recognise that there is a longstanding discourse of hierarchy among nation states, with some wielding considerably more power and influence than others. The US is considered to be the world hegemon followed by other nations organised in hierarchical order. Moreover, there are wide and increasing inequalities of income within and between nation states of the world (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). Brown (2007: 44) argues that there is a ‘widespread perception that we live in an unjust world’. The inequality amongst nation states is based not just on an unequal distribution of wealth; there are various other dimensions of inequality such as military power, moral standing (Pogge, 2008) and level of human development (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). The wide and entrenched international inequalities are often reflected in what I have termed as the discourse of hierarchy of nation states.

Pogge (2008) maintains that a country’s political power in the international arena is determined by three factors: military power, economic strength and international moral standing. He argues that the US scores much higher on military power compared to the other two indices. Pakistan too enjoys disproportionate military strength compared to other indices like human development and economic prosperity. The country was ranked at 146th position in terms of human development index (United Nations Development Programme, 2013) and at 12th position in terms of its military capability (Global Firepower, 2013). This uneven profile of Pakistan partly explains the enormous power the armed forces wield within the country.

The discourse of hierarchy of nations is a significant one internationally as well as nationally in many countries, including Pakistan. Pogge (2008) argues that the strength profile of a country can be used to understand the actions and underlying motives of leaders of different countries. He posits that countries with high military power ‘tend to benefit from heightened insecurity and tension by enjoying greater freedom of

action due to greater acquiescence on the part of their own citizens and other countries' (2008: 3). He cites the example of the US as a country whose military power is much higher relative to its economic and moral standing in the international arena. He argues that the ruling politicians in the US stand to gain from an insecure international environment. From my own experience of living in Pakistan I know that the discourse of hierarchy of nations is a widely used by ordinary people, the media and the politicians. This discourse presents Pakistan as an economically poor country that has a strong military.

3.2.7 The Discourse of American Imperialism

In this section, I focus in greater detail on the position of the US as world hegemon, drawing together various arguments touched on in earlier sections. Many writers (e.g. Leaman, 2004; Billon & Khatib, 2004; Ferguson, 2004; Chomsky, 2006; Acharya, 2007; Mazari, 2009a, 2009b; Adriaenssens & Baker, 2009) have drawn on the discourse of US imperialism while analysing US policies and actions in the Modern Episteme. The modus operandi and actions of the US were somewhat constrained in the bipolar world where its strategic international policy was predominantly defined by the discourse of containment. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US did not feel the need to act as cautiously as it had done during the Cold War period and there was a qualitative shift in its policies, actions and modus operandi in the Post-Cold War Episteme. According to Leaman (2004: 235), this was because 'with the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States assumed a position of military dominance unparalleled in world history.'

The discourse of US imperialism became much more prominent after the September 11 attacks due to 'the fact that it [US] seized on 9/11 as an opportunity to take radical action to in an effort to expand U.S. power' (Leaman, 2004: 239). Leaman (2004) argues that the September 11 attacks provided the US establishment an opportunity to grant themselves a licence to use unrestrained violence to achieve their strategic objectives across the world and simultaneously sustain domestic military spending which was becoming increasingly untenable in the Post-Cold War Episteme. Actions of the US in its 'war on terror' have been criticised by people drawing on the discourse of US imperialism. Billon and Khatib (2004: 120) argue that besides toppling the Taliban government 'because of the demonstrated presence of Al-Qaeda' in Afghanistan,

another strategic objective of the US invasion of the country was facilitating the interests of a Californian company UNOCAL which was awarded a contract to lay a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan. By doing so, the US was able to contain the Russian and Iranian influence over the energy resources of the region. As discussed in an earlier section, many conflicts have an economic basis and the US imperialism, too, has a strong economic motive.

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was criticised even more strongly and widely by people drawing on the discourse of US imperialism. This was because, firstly, the evidence for Iraq's links either to the September 11 attacks or to the Al-Qaeda were, at best, tenuous, and, secondly, Iraq, unlike Afghanistan, was a resource rich country. Bilon and Khatib (2004: 122) argue that Iraq posed a two-fold problem for the US in its quest for unrestrained access to cheap oil. On the one hand, Saddam Hussein had a track record of embargoing oil exports on political grounds and trying to manoeuvre high prices for oil through the OPEC, and, on the other hand, Iraq, due to the UN sanctions, 'was heavily underinvested' and had one of 'the lowest production/reserve ratio'. By invading Iraq and toppling Saddam, the US conveniently resolved both these problems; by doing so, there remained no threat of a capricious dictator manipulating oil supplies and prices, and with a 'free' Iraq, there was no need for UN sanctions and new investment in the oil infrastructure could go ahead. Leaman (2004: 240) argues:

Making Iraq the rhetorical center of the so-called axis of evil had nothing to do with 9/11. It was instead a continuation of the internal administration discussions of January and February 2001 that matched a desire to "dissuade" countries from engaging in "asymmetrical challenges" to the United States with plans for the division of the world's second-largest oil reserves among the world's contractors.

As discussed in an earlier section, President Bush tried to legitimise the invasion of Iraq by using the discourse of promoting democracy. Leaman (2004: 244) argues the Bush administration used the attacks to pursue long term foreign policy objectives of the US and by doing so they aimed 'to dominate the region and control Iraq's oil over the long term'. Acharya (2007: 288) also argues that the US tried to legitimise the invasion of Iraq by 'hang[ing] the war on terror and regime change and democracy promotion agendas on the prior and evolving justifications for humanitarian intervention'.

Acharya (2007) maintains that the US used *the Report of the International Commission for Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty* (International Commission for Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001) to garner support and present a façade of legitimacy for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. He goes on to argue that the *Report* does *not* include the restoration of democracy as a just cause for military intervention and violation of a state's sovereignty.

From my own experience of living in Pakistan, I know that the discourse of US imperialism has been quite common in the country. One heard this discourse in everyday conversations, the media and the academic circles. Mazari (2009b), a senior Pakistani academic, argues that the US seized the September 11 attacks as an opportunity to operationalize its strategic agenda in Pakistan. She wrote (Mazari, 2009b):

Clearly the Americans are suffering from an overdose of arrogance, especially when it comes to Pakistan and Afghanistan and no one exemplifies it better than Holbrooke [US special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan 2009-10] who shows no interest in learning anything about Pakistan or its people, but comes over far too frequently to push our compliant leaders into doing US bidding or simply to show the imperial colours.

An important implication of this discourse is that the conventional modern principles of national sovereignty and legitimate authority have been significantly compromised, especially in the case of states that were invaded by the US as part of its 'war on terror'. Thus, the discourse of US imperialism has been a very significant one in the Post-Cold War Episteme and has been used commonly to analyse and criticise the US actions in the context of the 'war on terror'.

3.2.8 Discussion – The Discourses of Legitimate Authority – the Nation State and the International System

In this section, I discussed some of the key discourses related to the notions of the nation-state and the international system and the issue of legitimate authority in the context of declaring and waging wars. I also discussed the discourses of secular nationalism and religion in national and international politics. I concluded the section by discussing the discourse of American imperialism. Doing so was important because, notwithstanding the challenge posed by American imperialism and globalisation to the

international system that developed during the Modern Episteme, the discourses of the sovereign nation-state and the international system continue to be central in any discussion of international conflicts in the Post-Cold War Episteme. In the next section, I analyse some salient discourses related to ethical conduct of wars or *jus in bello*.

3.3 The Discourses of Ethical Conduct in War – Jus in Bello

In the previous sections, I have discussed discourses related to the causes of war and the legitimate authorities who can declare wars. In this section, I engage with some discourses and counter-discourses related to ethical warfare or *jus in bello* that were used by Western politicians and the critics of the ‘war on terror’ respectively. These include discourses of the rights of lawful combatants, permissible weapons, prevention of harm to non-combatants and collateral damage. Finally, in this section, I consider the discourse of ‘supreme emergency’ that has been used to justify conduct of war that was previously considered unethical.

3.3.1 The Discourse of the Rights of the Lawful Enemy Combatants

One of the important discourses of ethical warfare is the discourse of the rights of the lawful enemy combatants. The key sources of this discourse in the Modern Episteme comprise The Hague and Geneva Conventions of 1907 and 1949 respectively. The Hague Convention stipulates that a lawful enemy combatant belongs to a hierarchically organised institution, usually a country’s army, bears a distinct and visible emblem, carries arms in full view of others and ‘conduct[s] their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war’ (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1907: Chapter1, Article 1) . The Geneva Convention (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1949a) stipulates that members of the armed forces and other non-combat personnel of the opposite side who get wounded or fall sick ‘shall be respected and protected in all circumstances’.

The discourse of rights of enemy combatants can be traced back to the writings of Saint Ambrose in the Medieval Christian Episteme discussed earlier in this chapter. Saint Augustine maintained that soldiers of both sides fighting a war were morally equal, even the ones fighting an unjust war. Therefore, as soon as a soldier got wounded or surrendered it become incumbent upon the soldiers of the opposite side to care for and protect him.

The actions of the US-led forces in the 'war on terror' were strongly criticised by people drawing on the discourse of the rights of lawful enemy combatants. Michaelson and Shershow (2004: 293) argue that the US is in 'flagrant violation of international law' because of its policy to indefinitely detain terrorism suspects at Guantanamo Bay without a judicial trial and treating them as unlawful enemy combatants who did not have to be accorded the status of prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions. Thus, the discourse of the rights of lawful enemy combatants is an important one in the context of the 'war on terror' because the US government tried to sidestep the constraints imposed by The Hague and The Geneva Conventions by declaring the opposite side as entirely comprising unlawful combatants.

3.3.2 The Discourse of Permissible Weapons

Another important discourse of ethical warfare is the discourse of permissible weapons. This discourse gained salience in the Modern Episteme with the creation of international humanitarian law (e.g. International Committee of the Red Cross, 2004a and 2004b). The discourse of permissible weapons is based on a two-point criterion for differentiating between permissible and non-permissible weapons and includes:

- (1) the requirement that a distinction be made at all times between civilians and combatants; and (2) the prohibition of the use of weapons which inflict excessive injury or suffering on combatants or render their death inevitable.

(International Committee of the Red Cross, 2004b: 6)

According to this discourse, any weapon that violates this criterion is considered illegal under international humanitarian law. Some conventional weapons which are considered illegal include landmines, incendiary weapons and blinding laser weapons. More recently, in 2008 the use of cluster munitions was also made illegal (Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Convention on Cluster Munitions, 2008).

According to the discourse of permissible weapons, another category of weapons that are considered illegitimate are the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (Christopher, 2004). WMD include biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. The use of chemical and biological weapons was declared illegal through the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the biological weapons convention in 1972 respectively (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2013 a & b). Although many writers consider the nuclear

weapons as violating all principles of *jus ad bellum* as well as *jus in bello*, the use of these weapons has not been outlawed *per se*.

The US-led 'war on terror' was criticised by people drawing on the discourse of permissible weapons. For example, Northcott (2008) argues that in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, US planes killed and injured many people, including children. Very recently, US drone strikes have been criticised by Amnesty International (2013) as contravening international humanitarian law:

. . . the USA has unlawfully killed people in drone strikes, and that such killings may amount in some cases to extrajudicial executions or war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law.

Thus, the discourse of permissible weapons is an important one in the context of my research as it was used extensively in Pakistan as well as internationally by people to criticise the US-led 'war on terror'.

3.3.3 The Discourse of Preventing Harm to Non-Combatants

The discourse of protecting non-combatants or civilians from harm during war is another important discourse of ethical warfare or *jus in bello*. Many critics of the 'war on terror' have criticised the actions of the US-led coalitions, drawing on this discourse. For example, Northcott (2007: 91) argues that the implications of the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the US-led forces 'have been terrible' for Iraqi civilians. He goes on to argue that post-Saddam, Iraq became one of the most lawless places on earth, where ordinary people could not go about their daily lives without extreme fear of violence of the worst kind. He claims:

On this account American forces have been terroristic in their provocation of a state of lawlessness and violence throughout Iraq, and in their use of indiscriminate force, such as in the brutal siege and destruction of the city of Falluja, and in the frequent resort to aerial bombs and mortars in civilian areas said to house insurgents.

(Northcott, 2007: 91)

Many instances of such behaviour have been reported. For example, in the context of Afghanistan, On Friday, July 11, 2008, *The Guardian* Newspaper (Sturcke & Agencies, 2008) stated:

A US air strike killed 47 civilians, including 39 women and children, as they were travelling to a wedding in Afghanistan, an official inquiry found today. The bride was among the dead.

Lichterman and Burroughs (2004) argue that US-led forces inflicted severe harm on non-combatant civilians during the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. They argue that the 'war on terror' brought untold suffering to civilian, non-combatant populations in both the countries by killing 'hundreds or thousands in the initial onslaught and often many more as a result of disease and privation caused by the destruction of essential services' (2004: 260). Such actions have been widely criticised in the Pakistani media.

The discourse of preventing harm to non-combatants has existed in all three epistemes. As discussed earlier, the discourse of protecting the innocent in a conflict appeared in the writings of Saint Ambrose in the Medieval Christian Episteme.

The discourse of protecting civilian non-combatants emerged formally in the Modern Episteme after the two World Wars and became enshrined in international humanitarian law through the Fourth Geneva Convention in 1949 (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1949b). Whereas the Fourth Geneva Convention provided significant protection to civilian non-combatants, the advances in technology of warfare in the 20th and the 21st centuries posed heightened threats to the same group of people.

As discussed above, there have been discourses related to preventing harm to civilian non-combatants in all the three epistemes. However, civilians have suffered harm, including physical injuries and death, in many conflicts, especially those involving advanced warfare technology (Lichterman & Burroughs, 2004). The states responsible for harming civilians often explain their actions by drawing on the discourse of 'collateral damage'. Collateral damage can be defined as unintentional harm caused in an international conflict to civilian targets (Kiernan, 2003). The origins of the discourse of collateral damage can be traced back to the discourse of 'double effect' introduced by Saint Thomas Aquinas. According to him, in a war actions with good as well as bad effects were permissible as long as the bad effects were unintended and proportional to the good effects and there was no way to produce the good effects without the accompanying bad effects (Christopher, 2004). This discourse of 'double effect' was taken up by Francisco de Vitoria (Christopher, 2004; Kinsella & Carr, 2007) at the

beginning of the Modern Episteme and transformed into the discourse of 'collateral damage', which we often encounter in the context of contemporary warfare.

Even though the discourse of collateral damage was used extensively by belligerent parties in the Modern Episteme, it encountered stiff resistance in international humanitarian law which posits that 'parties to a conflict must at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants in order to spare the civilian population and civilian property' (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2002: 6). Lichterman and Burroughs (2004) argue that the discourse of collateral damage has been used by the US establishment to sanitize and neutralize the terrible effects on civilian populations of the 'war on terror'. They write:

. . . when ordinary people with no conceivable connection to any attack on the United States—families asleep in their beds, or celebrating at a wedding, or failing to understand orders shouted in a foreign language at a checkpoint—are killed by nervous troops, an errant bomb, or for that matter a completely accurate strike informed by poor intelligence, it can be portrayed as a regrettable, but legal, consequence of warfare.

(Lichterman & Burroughs, 2004: 259)

Kiernan (2003) argues that US establishment's discourse of collateral damage, in the context of the 'war on terror', does little to make its actions resulting in harm to civilian, non-combatants appear legitimate and justified because they clearly contravene international humanitarian law. This is because Article 8 (2) (b) (iv) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998/2002) states that:

serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict [include] ... Intentionally launching an attack in the knowledge that such attack will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects . . .

Thus, the US establishment's discourse of collateral damage, in the context of the 'war on terror', has been widely criticised, because it sanitized strategies and actions that led to very significant civilian casualties in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan and, as such, contravened international humanitarian law. While the US explained much of the damage they caused as collateral, they also justified it in terms of the critical

importance of the situation they faced, which could be seen as a supreme emergency. This is discussed in the next section.

3.3.4 The Discourse of Supreme Emergency

The discourse of supreme emergency has been used to justify the violation of the normal principles of ethical warfare generally by intentionally targeting the civilian, non-combatant population. In his book *Just and Unjust Wars*, Walzer (1977: 252), introducing the discourse of supreme emergency, asks the question: 'What is it that defeat entails?'. The answer to this question, according to Walzer, determines whether a wartime situation can be classified as a supreme emergency. He posits a two-pronged criterion for evaluating whether a situation merits to be classified as a supreme emergency. The two points are: imminence and the nature of the danger. Either one on its own, for Walzer (1977), does not constitute a supreme emergency.

In order to elaborate the discourse of supreme emergency, Walzer (1977) cites the decision of Allied Forces to terror bomb German cities, during World War II, killing hundreds of thousands of civilian, non-combatant, German citizens. Explaining why the Nazi threat constituted a supreme emergency, Walzer (1977: 253) wrote:

...Nazism was an ultimate threat to everything decent in our lives, an ideology and a practice of domination so murderous, so degrading even to those who might survive, that the consequences of its final victory were literally beyond calculation, immeasurably awful...Here was a great threat to human values so radical that its imminence would surely constitute a supreme emergency...

For Walzer (1977), Nazism was a classic case which justified suspension of principles of ethical warfare and hence could be classified as a 'supreme emergency'. The discourse of supreme emergency posits that certain situations are different from ordinary wartime dangers and threats because they not only entail defeat, resulting in the death and imprisonment of the surrendering army's soldiers, but the destruction of a whole political community along with everything they believe in and value. Therefore, when Winston Churchill (Walzer 1977: 254) said that German victory would not only be disastrous for the British but also for the 'independent life of every small country in Europe', Walzer argued that he was 'speaking the exact truth' and, hence the situation constituted a 'supreme emergency'. Walzer (1977: 254) wrote:

For the survival and freedom of political communities—whose members share a way of life, developed by their ancestors, to be passed on to their children—are the highest values of international society. Nazism challenged these values on a grand scale, but challenges more narrowly conceived, *if they are of the same kind*, have similar moral consequences. They bring us under the rule of necessity (and necessity knows no rules).

[emphasis in original]

And when Walzer said ‘necessity knows no rules’ he meant that the rules pertaining to *jus in bello* do not hold in ‘supreme emergencies’. The discourse of ‘supreme emergency’ allows the suspension of one of the cardinal principles of the just war tradition – non-combatant immunity. President Bush (2001a) in an address to the joint session of the Congress said:

We have seen their kind before. They're the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions, by abandoning every value except the will to power, they follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism.

It is clear from excerpt from President Bush’s speech that he equated the danger posed by Islamic militants to that of Nazism in the first half of the 20th century and, hence, it merited a response that could ignore principles of ethical warfare. For example, Lichterman and Burroughs (2004: 260) argue that in the Post-Cold War period, the US forces often used the tactic of “shock bombing” to induce extreme fear in the target population such that the adversary would ‘crumble quickly’. Therefore, the discourse of supreme emergency was highly relevant for understanding President Bush’s construction of the September 11 attacks and for contextualising many of the actions he initiated as part of the ‘war on terror’ in the Post-Cold War Episteme.

3.3.5 Discussion – The Discourses of Ethical Conduct of War or *Jus in Bello*

In this section, I have discussed some key discourses related to ethical conduct of warfare or *jus in bello*. The US-led ‘war on terror’ was strongly criticised (e.g. by Lichterman and Burroughs, 2004; Michaelson & Shershow, 2004; Northcott, 2007) drawing on the discourses of ethical warfare, briefly analysed above. However, part of the justification for the use of non-ethical strategies has been that the nature of warfare has changed, in that attacks are often initiated by terrorists rather than

sovereign nations. In the next section, I discuss the discourses of terrorism and specifically Islamic terrorism. This discussion is important because these have become the most important political discourses of the Post-Cold War Episteme and are crucial for understanding the evolution of the discursive formation of international conflicts during this period.

3.4 The Discourse of Terrorism

The discourse of terrorism is a very important one in the context of my research as it was carried out when the memory of the September 11 attacks was still fresh and the US-led 'war on terror' was in full swing. Schmid (1988, cited in Weinberg, 2005: 3) defines terrorism as:

An anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons ... whereby the direct targets of the violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators.

The origins of the discourse of terrorism in the Modern Episteme can be traced back to late 18th century to the 'Jacobin rule (1793-94) under Robespierre, which became known as the "Reign of Terror" (Weinberg, 2005: 18). The discourse of terrorism, as we understand it today, emerged in the wake of an assassination attempt on Napoleon in Paris in 1800 (Keane, 2013a). Weinberg (2005) argues that actions of certain groups even before the French Revolution would have met the criteria that emerge from the modern discourse of terrorism. He gives the example of Zealots-Sicarii in the 1st century A.D. whose aim was to initiate a Jewish revolt against Roman control in Judea. In order to do so, they encouraged use of violence against Romans in order to incite violent suppression of Jews by the Roman rulers, which they hoped would lead to a Jewish uprising. In the Modern Episteme, another example of a group of people who resorted to terrorist violence was that of the Fenian Dynamiters – a group of Irish revolutionaries who planted bombs on the London Underground and mainline railway stations in the late 19th century (Keane, 2013b). Their main objective was to instil fear in the heart of the imperial metropolitan centre and galvanize their demand for an independent Irish Republic.

Weinberg (2005) maintains that people who resort to terrorist violence hope to achieve a number of objectives through their actions. Firstly, they aim to instil fear in the target population, which they hope would pressurise the relevant authorities to concede to their demands or agenda. Secondly, through their actions, they seek attention to highlight their causes. Thirdly, they aim for the authorities in control of the target territories to overreact and clamp down on the groups associated with the perpetrators of terrorism as this would further galvanize negative sentiment amongst other members of the group who normally desist from resorting to terrorist tactics. Fourthly, they aim to raise morale of their own group members by successfully perpetrating terrorist violence and achieving one or more of the above-stated objectives. Fifthly, in certain circumstances, they use their actions to disrupt the chances of political settlement of disputes through negotiations between relatively moderate groups of the opposite sides.

The discourse of terrorism posits some key differences between terrorist violence and conventional warfare (Christopher, 2004). As discussed earlier, one of the key discourses of just cause of war relate to legitimate authority. However, terrorist violence, since it is, in most cases, carried out by non-state actors, does not meet this criterion. The discourse of terrorism posits that the perpetrators of terrorism do not subscribe to various discourses of ethical warfare like the discourse of caring for wounded soldiers or those who may have surrendered. Most importantly, the discourse of terrorism posits that, unlike conventional wars, terrorists do not differentiate between military and non-military targets. In fact, in most cases civilian targets are preferred by terrorists as this strategy has the capacity to instil greater fear in the members of the target population.

The discourse of terrorism, in the final analysis, is a judgemental discourse. Very few groups of people who are labelled as terrorist accept the label and usually respond by presenting a counter-argument and paint the authorities who are their actual targets as brutal and oppressive (Weinberg, 2005). Weinberg (2005: 2) illustrates the knotty problem of classifying people or groups as terrorist:

Those of us living in the wealthy Western democracies call “terrorists” the same people many inhabitants of the impoverished parts of the world would think of as “freedom fighters” – viewing them in virtually the same way, for

example, that young Americans and Britons learn to think of Robin Hood and his Merry Men.

Since the September 11 attacks, the discourse of terrorism has become increasingly important in the context of Pakistan. This is because the decision of successive Pakistani governments to become an ally in the US-led 'war on terror' has enraged various extremist groups in the country, especially the tribal areas, who, in turn, unleashed unprecedented attacks in all parts of the country.

3.4.1 The Discourse of State Terrorism

In the previous section, I mentioned that terrorist violence in many cases is perpetrated by non-state actors. This does not preclude the use of this form of violence by nation states. However, whether resort to violence by sovereign nation states, in certain circumstances, can be classified as terrorism is a moot point (Blakeley, 2009). Notwithstanding the debate around the issue, I argue that the discourse of state terrorism is a valid and useful one to understand contemporary international conflicts. If we look at the definition of terrorism by Weinberg (2005) in the previous section, it does mention state actors as possible perpetrators of terrorist violence. The United Nations' (1999: Article 2, 1b) *International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism* also does not preclude nation states in its definition of terrorism, which it articulates as:

... [an] act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

(1999: Article 2, 1b)

According to the definitions offered by the United Nations (1999) and Weinberg (2005), state activities, in certain cases, can be classified as terrorism. In fact, Blakeley (2009: 1), a reader in international relations at the University of Kent, argues that:

State terrorism is one of a number of coercive tools that have regularly featured in the foreign policy practices of liberal democratic states from the North. State terrorism should be understood as a threat or act of violence by agents of the state that is intended to induce extreme fear in a target

audience, so that they are forced to consider changing their behaviour in some way.

Blakeley (2009) argues that there has been resurgence in the use of state terrorism by the neoliberal democracies of the West, especially by the US and the UK, in the years following the September 11, 2001 attacks. She suggests this spate of state terrorism has included support for regimes that regularly use repression and terrorist violence against their own citizens, excessive use of force by the coalition forces during the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, unlawful detentions of terrorism suspects and inhumane treatment of prisoners.

This section has demonstrated that the ambit of the discourse of terrorism can and does go beyond the unethical resort to violence only by non-state actors. In fact, the discourse of state terrorism, albeit contested by scholars, has been there for a long time within the discursive formation of international relations. Since the US initiated the 'war on terror' in response to the September 11 attacks, there has been resurgence in the use of this discourse in popular media as well as the academia. Thus, the discourse of state terrorism would have potentially been available to the participants of my study.

3.4.2 The Discourse of Islamic Terrorism

While terrorist groups have come from a wide range of backgrounds and have espoused many different causes, an increasingly dominant discourse has been that of Islamic terrorism. In this section, I consider the origins of the discourse of Islamic terrorism, the categories and labels it uses and the ways in which it has been problematized and challenged. The discourse of Islamic terrorism has become one of the defining features of the Post-Cold War Episteme (Jackson, 2007a). In his veterans' day address in Pennsylvania in November 2005, President Bush (2005) said:

. . . their attacks serve a clear and focused ideology, a set of beliefs and goals that are evil but not insane. Some call this evil "Islamic radicalism," others "militant jihadism" and still others "Islamofacism . . . These extremists distort the idea of jihad into a call for terrorist murder against Christians and Hindus and Jews and against Muslims themselves who do not share their radical vision.

President Bush in the above extract sets out the nature and the gravity of the challenge posed by Islamic terrorism.

Jackson (2007a) argues that the discourse of Islamic terrorism, which captured public attention in the wake of the September 11 attacks, has deeper roots. Firstly, it can be traced back to the formal study of religious terrorism, heralded by David Rapoport's (1984) influential article titled 'Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions'. Secondly, the discourse borrows many of its central terms and key constructs from the discourse of orientalism, which came to the fore with some key events across the world like the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Rushdie affair. The September 11 attacks on the US acted as a catalyst for the discourse of Islamic terrorism to precipitate and capture popular consciousness. Thirdly, the discourse of Islamic terrorism draws on certain cultural stereotypes of the religion and its followers. These stereotypes present Muslims as violent, extremist, backward and mysterious. Jackson (2007a: 400-1) argues that by drawing on these sources, the discourse builds on:

. . . the 'good war' narrative surrounding the struggle against fascism during the Second World War; mythologies of the Cold War, including the notion of 'the long war', the deeply embedded civilization-versus-barbarism narrative, the cult of innocence, the language and assumptions of the enemy within, the labels and narratives of 'rogue states', and the discourse surrounding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The discourse of Islamic terrorism implicitly presents violence as a fundamental part of Islam, primarily because the Islamic doctrine makes no clear cut distinction between the religious and the secular and offers guidance on the personal as well as the social aspects of life (Jackson, 2007a). Jackson (2007a) argues that the very term *Islamic Terrorism* links Islam to terrorist violence, an association that works powerfully at an unconscious level. This implicit association suggests that terrorist violence gains legitimacy from Islamic doctrine itself. Therefore, the discourse implicitly presents religious war or 'jihad' as a key component of Islamic polity.

Schwartz (2004) challenges a simplistic interpretation of the notion of 'jihad' because the notion has been a contentious one in Islamic history. According to him, external interference in Muslim territories has not always led to a violent reaction:

The dominant tendency has been to interpret “the greater” jihad as a personal quest for religious rectitude (jihad’s most literal translation is “struggle”) (Euben 2003, 6–7). The predominant reaction to Western colonization of the Islamic world—from the religious schools, or *madrasas*, of South Asia to the Wahhabist traditionalist reaction to colonization in the Arabian Peninsula—has been a retreat into private moral rectitude.

(Schwartz, 2004: 279)

Halliday (2002) also questions the tendency to establish a causal link between religious doctrine and actual resort to violence as all religions offer precepts that sanction violence as well as pacifism.

Schwartz (2004) problematizes some underlying assumptions of the discourse of Islamic terrorism that aim to link terrorist violence to Islamic doctrine. He posits that contemporary Islamic terrorism can be better understood as a reaction to geopolitical events that took place in Middle East and Southeast Asia in the latter half of twentieth century. He argues that the anti-Soviet policies pursued by the US in Afghanistan created conditions conducive to the development of extremist Islamic ideology that was subsequently operationalized through violent terrorist tactics. The genesis of the Taliban lay in ‘the mass Afghan exile in Pakistan in 1980s’ (Schwartz, 2004: 280). Hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees encountered the narrow and strict Wahabi interpretation of Islamic doctrine in religious seminaries, supported and funded by the Saudi government, in the north west of Pakistan. This interpretation of Islam was very different from the indigenous version of the religion in the Indian subcontinent which had a strong mystical tradition that valued non-violent and peaceful coexistence with other religious communities. The radicalised Afghan and Pakistani youth gathered under the banner of the ideology of Wahabi Islam to form the Taliban movement with its focus on purging Afghanistan of corruption and violence that resulted from the infighting of various factions of the erstwhile Afghan mujahedeen, who had been at the forefront of fighting the Soviet Union and were supported by the US and Pakistani establishments (Schwartz, 2004). All the mujahedeen fighting the Soviet Union were not of Afghan origin. Many of them had come from the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, and had links with Al-Qaeda. After the retreat of Soviet Union from Afghanistan

in 1988, these foreign fighters became the allies of the Taliban government and used the Afghan soil to plan attacks on Western targets. Leaman (2004: 243) writes:

. . . the U.S. effort to recruit, train, arm, and supply volunteers from several Muslim countries to fight the Soviet Union and its allies in Afghanistan began in July 1979. Following the logic that the enemy of my enemy is my friend, the United States supported militant Islamic organizations fighting in Afghanistan in an effort to harm the Soviet Union, in cooperation with the governments of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, and China.

Many writers (e.g. Billon and Khatib, 2004; Leaman, 2004; Schwartz, 2004; Chomsky, 2006; Jackson, 2004, 2007a) have argued that the discourse of Islamic terrorism has been used by the ruling elite in the US, for obfuscating their questionable geopolitical policies and interventions in the Middle East and Southeast Asia and as a façade for legitimizing their imperial ambitions in the Third World countries in the Post-Cold War Episteme. In Pakistan, there was a widespread feeling that what was dubbed as Islamic terrorism was actually a response to US actions, driven by its imperial ambitions, in various parts of the world. Sattar (2002), writing in one of the leading English newspapers of Pakistan, asserts:

President Reagan turned the Afghan struggle against Soviet occupation into a crusade, and a covert American war against the Soviets, and called them an “evil empire.” CIA pumped billions of dollars into Afghanistan, fanning the war, and unwittingly, Islamic “fundamentalism.” The rise of the Taliban and Islamic fundamentalism was the bitter harvest of this modern crusade.

Thus, the discourse of Islamic terrorism has a long history, but it captured popular consciousness in the context of the US-led ‘war on terror’. It has been used by the establishments of various Western countries, most notably the US, to articulate the danger posed by a transnational network of militant extremists operating on the fringe of Islam. However, its critics (e.g. Billon and Khatib, 2004; Leaman, 2004; Schwartz, 2004; Chomsky, 2006; Jackson, 2007a) have challenged it as a façade for questionable policies of the US in the past and its imperial ambition in the Post-Cold War Episteme.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have identified and analysed some key discourses related to international conflicts that were potentially available to the participants of my

research. I showed how these discourses were used by the politicians, academics, and the media. Some of these were discourses of just causes of war. Other discourses related to the idea of the nation state, the international system and ethical warfare. Finally, some discourses, like that of American imperialism, can be best classified as counter-discourses that were used by people to resist the discourses used by politicians to present the 'war on terror' as legitimate and just. These discourses informed my research design and, very importantly, the analysis of data.

4 Research Methodology

In this chapter, I discuss the research process itself and some significant decisions that I took and their implications for the study. I describe and reflect on issues relating to the design of the study and the actual process of data collection. I begin with briefly outlining the ontological and epistemological basis of my study and the paradigm of research that I used. After this, I discuss the method of data collection that I used. I outline some key advantages of using focus groups in the context of my research. Subsequently, I explain some key methodological decisions, like the selection of the site and participants of research, which I took. This is followed by reflection on my own role in the research process and how my own subjectivity might have influenced various aspects of this study. I then discuss some ethical considerations relevant to my research and how I addressed these. After this, I briefly explain how I analysed the data. Finally, I discuss some strengths and limitations of my research design.

4.1 The Theoretical Framework

Although in this chapter I discuss how and why the study was designed the way it was and the process of data collection itself, I have tried to ground these discussions within the broader theoretical framework developed for it in the previous two chapters. Doing this has helped me in developing a coherent methodological narrative for the study, anchored within the appropriate ontological and epistemological frameworks. The study is grounded in an ontological discourse that posits that rather than there being a fixed, objective external reality, the objects in the human world are socially constructed through discourses that people use to talk about them. The epistemological implication of this is that knowledge about the world rather than comprising objective facts consists of versions of events and objects in the world that are constructed through discourse and as such is culturally and historically contingent and located. This is in line with what Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007: 5) advocate:

...ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these, in turn, give rise to methodological considerations; and these, in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection. This view moves us beyond regarding research methods as simply a technical exercise and as concerned with understanding the world; this is informed by how we view our world(s),

what we take understanding to be, and what we see as the purposes of understanding.

As discussed in the previous chapters, this study has been carried out within a social constructionist framework, using the qualitative paradigm of social research. These facts and the way the study was conceptualized during the initial stages have had a significant impact on the research process. The research question itself alludes to some important assumptions underpinning the study and its ideological location. Researchers working within the positivist paradigm aim to make and present their work as value-neutral, not affected by the person of the researcher and hence not ideologically driven. However, qualitative research, especially which is carried out within a social constructionist paradigm, questions the possibility of such value-neutral social enquiry. I also believe that every investigation is ideologically driven and culturally and historically located and so is this study. Along with describing the process of the research, I will also try to reveal the locatedness of the study – historically, culturally, ideologically, and personally.

Most social research is, arguably, concerned with the interpretation of meaning. And the creation and the interpretation of meaning is basically a subjective process affected by the personal history of the relevant actors and the social environment that they inhabit. The research question that this study aims to answer is: How do middle class Pakistani young people construct contemporary international conflicts? The term ‘construct’ in the question alludes to some key assumptions and ideological moorings of the study. The term points to the possibility of multiple, varied, contrasting and even opposing versions of the then recent and relevant international and national events that were constructed subjectively by individuals who participated in this study. Thus, the idea of a fixed, stable, and objective version of events relevant to this study is problematised. Instead, the key events that have arguably defined and shaped the international conflict are taken to be discursively produced.

In the sections that follow, I provide a rationale for the method of data collection used by me for this research. I used focus groups to collect data for my research and this decision was driven by some key ontological and epistemological considerations. It is in the context of these considerations that I developed the rationale for using focus groups for my research.

4.2 The Method of Data Collection – Focus Groups

During the early stages of designing the study, contrary to popular tendency to talk about the relevant international events in essential and clear-cut terms, I wanted to know more about how young people attending private schools in Pakistan interpreted and assigned meaning to contemporary international conflicts. Due to this interest in looking at the subjective and personal construction of relevant key events, adopting a qualitative paradigm of research appeared to make good epistemological sense. This is because in contrast to quantitative research qualitative enquiry is historically and culturally grounded and aims to understand the representations of the social world and the meanings individual actors ascribe to these (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). The next stage in the design process involved deciding upon the methods of data collection. In line with Cohen, Manion & Morrison's (2007) idea of basing such decisions in ontological and epistemological considerations, I wanted to select a method of data collection that would sit comfortably with the theoretical orientation of the study.

Using a method of data collection that would encourage the participants to talk about contemporary international conflicts and key issues related to these seemed appropriate. Qualitative interviews and focus groups provide opportunities for participants to talk relatively more freely about chosen issues as compared to structured interviews. I decided to select focus groups because, in relation to the topic of this research, they presented some key advantages over other qualitative methods of data collection, including individual interviews.

The origins of focus groups have been traced back to the early 20th century for the purposes of market research where commercial organizations used this method to investigate the consumption patterns, effects of advertising campaigns, and the launch of new products within the target population (Bryman, 2004). However, towards the middle of the century it began to make inroads as a method of data collection within the field of social research (Parker and Tritter, 2006). It is now a well-established and popular method of data collection in social sciences. The reasons for the growing popularity of focus groups in social research are many and varied. These range from some fundamental ontological and epistemological considerations to more pragmatic reasons like making a more efficient use of time and other resources.

Parker and Tritter (2006) suggest that focus groups are a method of choice for collecting data where the aim is to explore and investigate the beliefs, values, and positions of a group of individuals who have certain common characteristics that are relevant to the focus of investigation. Focus groups are often used for studies where the aim is to explore, understand and develop deeper insights into matters pertaining to their key focuses (Krueger, 1994). Bryman (2004: 346) also states that focus groups are especially suitable where 'the accent is upon interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning.' Since my aim in this study was to explore how a certain group of young people in Pakistan constructed their understanding of the international conflict in the wake of September 11 attacks, focus groups appeared to be an appropriate option. Therefore, the decision to use focus groups was significantly driven by the focus of my research.

Focus groups seemed a good option because the topic of discussion was one that many young people in Pakistan were quite passionately interested in. Rather than being a 'personal trouble', it was more of a 'public issue' (Mills, 2000: 8) that was publicly debated in different locations. Since all the young people who participated in the study were from middle-class families, they had access to a range of sources of information, including newspapers, cable television, and the internet. Therefore, arguably, they had access to a range of discourses about the September 11 attacks and the subsequent international events like the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. During the years when the fieldwork for the research was carried out, the September 11 attacks and the ensuing international conflict were popular topics of discussion in many Pakistani families and social gatherings. Therefore, the substantive issues were actively discussed in the social world inhabited by the participants of the study. During the years when the data for the study was collected, I was working in schools similar to the ones where the focus groups were conducted. On a number of occasions, I had the chance to overhear young people sitting in informal groups in the school ground, and common-rooms animatedly discussing the September 11 attacks and the subsequent international events. Therefore, it seemed that their constructions were to a significant extent informed by their social interactions with others, including their peers. Hence, focus groups rather than individual interviews seemed more appropriate to discuss these matters with the participants of the research. Thus, in a very real way, by using

focus groups I was trying to understand the personal investment of individuals in an issue that was essentially and originally a public one – the antecedents, the dynamics, the politics, and the power relations of the contemporary international conflict.

As discussed above, the nature of the topic of investigation was such that it could be best investigated using a method that replicated the social situations in which the relevant issues would have been discussed and debated by the participants of the study. Since the key point in this was the social interaction amongst the participants, there was a need for relinquishing control by me and giving it to the participants themselves. Focus groups seemed a good platform for doing so.

I want to clarify another related decision that I made – using focus groups rather than group interviews. Although these two terms are sometimes taken to be synonymous, I believe that there are clear distinctions between the two methods. Parker and Tritter (2006) have argued that the key difference between the two methods relates to the role of the interviewer. The interviewer in the group interview plays a more active role in the discussion and more proactively steers the course of discussion. The interviewer is more clearly in the driving seat during the session in a group interview. The fact that the researcher is referred to as the moderator in a focus group points to the essentially different role s/he is expected to play during the session. Rather than directing the discussion, the moderator facilitates discussion among the participants and consequently exercises a significantly lesser control over the substantive content of the discussion itself. This feature of focus groups made them more suitable for the purposes of my study because, as discussed above, there was a clear need to relinquish control and let the discussion be steered by the participants themselves.

My aim was not to find out what was there in the mind of a given individual. In line with the theoretical framework of this study, what I was really interested in finding out was how the young people who participated in this study constructed their understanding of the then current international conflict in a social context. Doing this seemed appropriate because, as discussed in chapter 2, I believe that people actively construct their understanding through their social interactions with other people. Using focus groups where the dynamics of the discussion were less influenced by the person of the researcher seemed to be closer to the actual scenarios in which these young people talked about such issues and constructed their personal positions.

Bryman (2004) also maintains that a key feature of the focus group method is the relinquishing of the control by the moderator in favour of the participants.

As discussed earlier, the key focus of the research rather than being a 'personal trouble' was first and foremost a 'public issue' – an issue of collective significance. Therefore, talking about these issues in a setting that was relatively closer to the actual situations in which the young people who participated in this study discussed these matters seemed a better choice. Due to this reason, I selected focus groups to collect information about how middle class young people in Pakistan constructed their understanding of the then recent international conflict. However, I acknowledge that the advantage of using focus groups was only relative in relation to other possible ways of collecting data such as individual and group interviews. No research setting can claim to exactly replicate the actual social environment that it aims to investigate. This is especially true for research projects using focus groups to understand how a certain group of individuals construct meaning in a social context (Bryman, 2004). This is so because the focus groups are specifically commissioned to collect data about a chosen topic – they are at best a replication of a naturally occurring social scenario. This obviously has implications for the group dynamics and the substantive content of these sessions; and the sessions organized for my research were no exception. The focus groups, however, afforded clear relative advantages over other methods of data collection in the context of my research.

Another factor that affects the focus group sessions is the presence of the moderator. This is further compounded when there is an obvious power relation between the participants and the moderator. Both the above mentioned factors had an impact on the research process for my study. Haugh (2008) has argued in detail for acknowledging and recognising the impact of other participants and the person of the moderator on the discursive positions that are constructed by an individual in the course of a focus group. He says that what the participants say in a focus group is taken by researchers unproblematically to be their position on relevant issues. Many studies do not adequately take into account the role social dynamics, including the presence of the researcher, play in the discursive constructions that take place in focus group sessions. Throughout this study, I have made an effort to be conscious and

reflexive of my own person in the research process, including the focus group sessions for collecting the data.

Like all focus groups, the sessions that I conducted were removed from the actual social settings in which these young people and others like them debated and discussed the relevant matters. I recognize that the focus groups were essentially *not* a natural setting; they were contrived scenarios that were recreated exclusively for the purpose of my study. Moreover, my presence as the moderator further affected the dynamics of the group and the process of discussion itself. I was not an ordinary adult but I was recognized as an individual in a position of authority within the broader system of which the schools where the participants studied were a part. Therefore, the focus groups cannot claim to replicate the actual social scenes within which such discussions actually would have taken place. The fact that the groups were formed specifically for the purpose of this study and were moderated by an adult who was seen to be in a position of authority all affected the dynamics of the sessions and the contributions of the participants.

I clearly acknowledge the effect of my presence on the dynamics of the focus group sessions that I conducted. However, like Barbour (2005), I also believe that the focus group method can reduce the effect of power imbalance between the interviewer and the interviewees. This is because the sessions reproduce the naturally occurring peer group formations in which young people discuss issues such as these ones. The presence of peers also reduces the perceived risk for the individual participants. Therefore, in addition to the advantage in terms of quality of data that was collected, using focus groups also afforded methodological and ethical advantages. The methodological advantage came from the fact that the method offered a comparatively relaxed and safe environment for the participants to talk about key issues related to the focus of my study. The presence of their peers made the participants feel more relaxed and at ease. Pfefferbaum et al. (2006) chose focus groups instead of individual interviews while talking to investigate the responses of a group of New York children to the September 11 attacks. They presented the rationale that the children would feel more comfortable in a group situation compared to a one-to-one encounter with an adult.

The ethical advantage related to the reduction of the power imbalance between me and the participants. Rather than one individual constantly responding to my questions and probes, there was a group of young people who discussed among themselves issues introduced by me. Although the key issues were introduced by me at specific points in the sessions, the subsequent discussions were then significantly driven and steered by the participants themselves. They responded to what others in the group said; this included agreeing with what others said, extending what someone else talked about, building upon another person's arguments, disagreeing with what someone else said, and challenging other participants' constructions etc. Thus, using focus groups seemed to be the appropriate method of data collection for my study as it partially mitigated the power imbalance between the participants and me and as such afforded clear methodological and ethical advantages.

Another reason that made focus groups a suitable method for data collection was related to the theoretical framework for my research. As discussed in chapter 2, people construct their positions about issues, especially the ones that have a collective significance in their social interactions with other people by drawing on the discourses available to them. Building on this idea, I have argued that people also construct their personal positions using discourses and discursive practices that are available to them. However, as discussed in chapter 2, people do not construct their positions and understandings drawing on discourses in a simple and straightforward way. In addition to accepting the dominant discourses, they, at times, also contest and resist the discourses that they encounter. Therefore, it made good sense to use a method of data collection that would allow the participants to articulate their positions by drawing on available discourses while engaging with each other. This would have allowed them to not only draw on existing discourses but also resist and contest discourses used by other participants. Thus, the focus groups organized for this study to some extent replicated the social settings in which the participants discussed and debated issues related to world politics and international conflicts. However, as acknowledged above, no research methods, including the ones used in this study can accurately reproduce the actual settings in which people go about their normal daily lives.

4.3 The Sample

In this section, I discuss some important decisions that I made regarding the study in terms of its geographical, cultural, socio-economic, political, and institutional location, the composition of the focus groups, and my role as the researcher. Doing this is critically important for any rigorous piece of qualitative research. This is because instead of aiming to generalize its claims, qualitative research recognises, acknowledges, and even celebrates its locatedness. It is this locatedness of my study that I aim to bring to the fore in this section. In the sections that follow, I discuss some key aspects of the sample of young people that was used for this research.

I begin by discussing why I carried out this research with young people attending private schools. I then discuss the salient features of the background, in relation to the focus of this research, of the cities in which the schools were located where the study was carried out. Next, I discuss the number of focus groups that I carried out. Subsequently, I briefly present a rationale for selecting the participants from a certain age group. Then, I discuss the gender composition of the focus group sessions. Finally, I discuss how the actual participants for various focus group sessions were selected.

4.3.1 Researching Students attending Private Schools

As stated in the research question, the research for this study was carried out with young people attending private schools in Pakistan. This was a conscious choice and was based on some important considerations. Most importantly, the decision to study how a certain group of middle class young people in Pakistan constructed their understanding of the then contemporary international conflict was to a significant extent influenced by my own personal history.

My relationship with the West, especially the UK is a long and significant one. I studied English literature for my first degree and finally came over to the UK for a postgraduate degree in Education at a highly charged and significant time in world history – 2001. The September 11 attacks were a regular feature of the informal discussions in the university cafeteria and were also discussed and debated at length in the electronic and print media. Perhaps, resuming my studies at this juncture was one of the reasons that led me to investigate this area. Edward Said (1978/1995) in his book *Orientalism* also refers to his personal background as one of the key motivations behind the book.

Said (1978/1995) also cites his simultaneous investment in two cultures – Palestinian and American – as one of the reasons that led him to write the book *Orientalism*. He also refers to the tension and pain of this simultaneous investment. Many of the research participants seemed to have a background similar to mine – middle-class, studying in an English medium school, possibly moving on to study for degrees at Western universities. I therefore wanted to explore how these young people constructed their understanding and subsequently positioned themselves in the debates surrounding the then recent international conflict.

There is a high level of inequality in Pakistani society. There is a relatively small prosperous upper middle class, a larger lower middle class, followed by a very big working class. These socio-economic divisions are mirrored, supported, and perpetuated by a multi-tiered education system (Ghazi et al. 2010). Commenting on the multiple systems of education that mirror the socioeconomic divisions in Pakistani society, Ghazi et al. (2010: 12) write:

Unfortunately, in Pakistan there are many kinds of educational institutions at all levels. In this way people have been introduced to many standards of education. There are basically three kinds of schools: the elite private institutions that cater to the upper class; the government-run schools those are commonly known as public schools, serving the lower echelons of the population and the religious schools which are known as Madrassas.

The vast majority of children from the upper middle class attend private schools. Most children from lower middle class and working class families attend state schools. These children represent the vast majority of Pakistani children. Finally, a small proportion of children from working class backgrounds, especially those coming from rural areas attend the religious seminaries or madrassas. I chose to carry out my research with young people attending private schools rather than those from the other two types of schools. Therefore, this decision was partly driven by my own background which was quite similar to the participants of the study. Another advantage of doing research with middle class young people attending private schools was that it was from this group that the future decision makers of Pakistan would come. At one stage during the fieldwork, I considered doing focus group sessions with madressah students also. However, I decided not to do so because, firstly, doing so might have been inadvisable

on security grounds, secondly, this would have entailed more time and resources and, thirdly, doing so would have introduced a level of complexity which would have been beyond the scope of this research.

4.3.2 The Choice of Schools

I decided to conduct the focus groups in four schools located in the cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Four out of six focus groups were conducted in two schools in Islamabad – two in each of the schools. The other two focus groups were carried out in two different schools in Rawalpindi. In this section, I outline some basic demographic and historical information about these two cities, which will help in contextualising the data and its analysis in later chapters.

Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan and is adjacent to the city of Rawalpindi. Notwithstanding their geographical proximity and the two being referred to as twin cities, they are very different from each other. The sharp differences and the marked contradictions that can be seen in various aspects of life in Pakistan are also reflected between these two cities. The social, economic and cultural differences between the two cities are significant from the perspective of this study. In this section, I briefly elaborate upon some of the salient differences between them, especially the ones that had a bearing on this research by virtue of having an effect on the participants of my focus groups.

Islamabad is a modern city that was planned and built during the 1960s. It was envisaged as the new capital of the country –presenting the modern face of Pakistan to the rest of the world. The city is located on the foot of the Margalla Hills which are a continuation of the Himalayas. Islamabad started off as a very small town, housing all the federal government departments and providing residential accommodation to the employees of these offices. Islamabad benefits from a naturally beautiful topography and a planned, modern built up environment. Due to these factors and also because of the relatively good law and order and security situation, Islamabad came to be seen as a destination of choice for building a second home by the well-off segments of Pakistani society living in other financial and industrial centres of the country. Many Pakistanis who immigrated to various countries in 1950s and the 1960s, also considered Islamabad favourably as a city where they could re-establish their roots in the country of their original heritage. Thus, the city which began as a small town, home

predominantly to civil servants and members of the diplomatic corps, became a much more diverse city, with relatively more affluent people from all parts of the country shifting there. I conducted three of the six focus groups in schools in Islamabad. All participants of these focus groups came from middle class families. Their parents were either civil servants, well to do entrepreneurs, or people of Pakistani origin who had returned after living for many years overseas.

The other three focus groups were conducted in the city of Rawalpindi. Rawalpindi in contrast to Islamabad has a long history – going back a couple of thousand years BC. It is not very far from the town of Taxila where rich archaeological remains of a town of the ancient Gandhara civilisation were found. During the British Raj, Rawalpindi developed as a military cantonment. At the time of the partition of the Indian Subcontinent, Rawalpindi became the seat of the military headquarter of Pakistan. The presence of the General Headquarters of the Pakistan Army has been the defining feature of the city. Due to this reason, Rawalpindi has traditionally been the home of the serving as well as retired army officers. Many of the pupils studying in the schools where the focus groups were carried out came from army families.

Traditionally, the army has played a significant role in the politics of Pakistan. Military intervention in the politics of the country has been the norm rather than the exception. By and large the military officers are suspicious and critical of the politicians and they see it as their ‘moral’ and ‘professional’ responsibility to intervene in the affairs of the government whenever they deem appropriate (Haqqani, 2006; Siddiqi, 2007). As a result, most army officers and their families have been supportive of the various military dictators and their political, albeit unconstitutional, adventures. However, in the case of General Pervaiz Musharraf and his government this relationship was far from straightforward. Traditionally, the army has supported the social status quo as it allowed repeated military interventions and opportunities to gain control of the government of the country.

During the military government of one of the previous military dictators, General Zia-ul-Haq, Pakistan was pushed at the forefront of the American resistance to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In fact, through the acquiescence and support of the Pakistan Government of the time Pakistan fought a proxy war for the USA against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, which arguably contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

During this time the Pakistan Army actively supported the indigenous resistance in Afghanistan to Soviet occupation (Chomsky, 2007; Kean et al., 2004). The members of the Afghan population that offered this resistance were referred to as the 'mujahedeen' (holy warriors). The Taliban are actually the next generation of the so called 'mujahedeen' or at least have strong ideological links with them. Over the last three decades the Pakistan Army developed a close relationship with various factions of the mujahedeen and the Taliban. It was partly these links to and sympathy with the Taliban of the more conservative factions of the Pakistan army that led to this ambivalent relationship of some officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army with General Pervaiz Musharraf. They saw General Musharraf's support of the war on terror as servile submission to the highhanded policies of the American Government of that time (Bennet-Jones, 2002). Therefore, some army officers saw General Musharraf as the saviour of the country from corrupt and inefficient politicians while others saw him as the obsequious agent of the American Government. This complex and complicated relationship of the army officers and their families with General Pervaiz Musharraf could possibly have had an impact on what the participants of the focus groups said as many of them came from either army families or that had close links with the army. Ascertaining such a causal link between the possible family background and the participants' constructions in the focus groups is not possible in the context of my research study. However, I will use this awareness to be sensitive to any differences that may emerge from the analysis of the data.

4.3.3 The Number of Focus Groups

As part of this research, I conducted six focus groups. The number of participants in the groups varied from four to six. A total of 32 individuals participated in these focus groups. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) suggest that the number of participants in a focus group can vary from 4 to 12. They also warn about some of the issues that can emerge if either the group size is too small or too large. During the course of my study, I found 5 to 6 to be a good number of participants. In the session where I had only 4 participants I felt that at times the group dynamic became somewhat weak. A group size larger than 6 I feel would also not be appropriate for a study like mine because the aim of the sessions was to bring out the richness of the participants' constructions rather than merely increasing the number of voices. Finch and Lewis (2003) maintain

that smaller group size is suitable for sensitive and complex issues. If a study was commissioned to explore the attitudes of a certain segment of population about a certain product or service then perhaps a larger group may be more appropriate.

I conducted six focus groups because they provided a range of perspectives on some of the key issues relevant to the focus of the study. I could have possibly done a couple of more sessions but constraint of time and resources made me decide otherwise. Moreover, I also felt that the range and depth of arguments made by the participants were quite rich and I was beginning to reach a point of saturation. A relatively small sample size in qualitative research is not seen as a problem. Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003: 83) suggest that in qualitative research by increasing the sample size beyond a certain point leads to 'diminishing return' from each new case that is added. Pfefferbaum et al. (2006) also, while investigating the emotional responses of American adolescents to September 11 attacks, used a small sample size. They conducted only one focus group comprising five participants. The only caveat Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) offer regarding the sample size in case of a focus group study is that the number of sessions should be more than one.

4.3.4 Age of the Participants

All participants in my research were studying in A-level. Therefore, they were mostly 17 to 18 year olds. I decided to do my research with this age group because these young people stood on the threshold of adulthood. I know from my experience of working with them that they usually had a passionate interest in national and international politics. The schools where I carried out the focus groups had a strong tradition of organizing model United Nations conferences. Many of the participants had participated in these events, which was a clear benefit from the perspective of my research because they had previous experience of talking about international affairs in a public forum. It will be pertinent to mention that out of the four schools where this research was carried out three schools – school A in Islamabad and schools C and D in Rawalpindi – were older and had more well-established traditions of organising model United Nations Conferences. However, it is quite likely that at least some of the participants from school B in Islamabad where two focus groups were conducted would have had the opportunity to participate in these conferences in other schools.

4.3.5 Gender of the Participants

Four out of the six focus groups were mixed sex groups whereas the remaining two were girls only. The composition of the focus groups in terms of gender of the participants reflected the wider organization of the schools where the participants of each group studied. The four mixed sex groups were conducted in mixed sex schools and the two girls only groups were conducted in a girls only school. The reason for mirroring the gender composition of the schools was that I wanted the focus groups to reproduce the actual social situations and circumstances in which the young people discussed and debated the issues relevant to my investigation. Finch and Lewis (2003 171) also cite this as one of the key strengths of the focus groups:

A further feature of focus groups is the spontaneity that arises from their stronger social context. In responding to each other, participants reveal more of their own frame of reference on the subject of study. The language they use, the emphasis they give and their general framework of understanding is more spontaneously on display.

The schools where I carried out this research were either mixed-sex or girls only; there were no boys-only schools. In case of the all-girls school there was no other choice but to do focus groups with female students only. However, it seemed to make good sense to do mix sex focus groups in the rest of the schools. Not doing so would have created an additional layer of artificiality in the research design.

4.3.6 Selection of Participants for the Focus Groups

The participants for the focus groups were selected by the head teachers of the respective schools. In each case, a few days prior to the actual session, I spoke with the head teachers and requested them to select students for the sessions. I asked them to look for students who they thought would participate actively in the sessions and would be happy to talk about issues relevant to the focus of the study. Thus, the composition of the groups was not random and was influenced by the head teacher of the school based on some broad guidelines provided by me. Finch and Lewis (2003) suggest that the composition of focus groups should not be left to random selection as is the case with the sampling for certain other methods of data collection. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) also make a similar argument regarding the selection of the participants for focus groups. Non-random selection of participants for focus groups is

due to specific nature of this method. Since focus groups are basically a method of data collection that encourages discussion of substantive issues by the participants themselves, with limited intervention and steering by the moderator, the selection has to be made quite carefully. Random selection can lead to a number of potential problems. For instance if the participants know each other too well they can become complacent, which can adversely affect the flow of the discussion. Similarly, a group of total strangers can create an uncomfortable and awkward environment which can also inhibit free and open discussion (Finch and Lewis, 2003). Table 4.1 gives lists the participants, date, and name of school for each of the six focus groups. It also provides some additional information about the participants who had either lived abroad or/and had other nationalities. This information is not comprehensive because I did not ask the participants about their life histories and any such information was incidentally volunteered by them.

Table 4.1 – List of Focus Groups, Participants, Schools, Dates and Cities

School A- Focus Group 1 – March 2005 – Islamabad		
Pseudonym	Gender	Other information
Maher	M	
Ahmer	M	
Salma	F	
Haniya	F	
Asma	F	
Amin	M	
School A – Focus Group 2 – September 2006 – Islamabad		
Pseudonym	Gender	Other information
Mansoor	M	
Harris	M	
Fahad	M	
Fareeha	F	
Wafa	F	She was an American national and had shifted to Pakistan a few years back.
Saima	F	
School B – Focus Group 3 – October 2007 – Islamabad		
Pseudonym	Gender	Other information
Afreen	F	She was a British national and her family had shifted to Pakistan a couple of years back.
Saba	F	
Hafsa	F	
Annum	F	
Malihah	F	
Iman	F	
School C – Focus Group 4 – February 2008 – Rawalpindi		
Pseudonym	Gender	Other information
Saeed	M	
Adil	M	
Komal	F	
Zoha	F	

Farah	F	
School D – Focus Group 5 – September 2008 – Rawalpindi		
Pseudonym	Gender	Other information
Nawira	F	
Aamer	M	
Babur	M	
Tabish	M	
Saira	F	
School B – Focus Group 6 – December 2008 – Islamabad		
Pseudonym	Gender	Other information
Natasha	F	She was a British national and had moved to Pakistan a few years back.
Aan	F	
Mysha	F	She had lived for most part of her life in Saudi Arabia and moved to Pakistan a couple of years back.
Huma	F	

The participants of each focus group that I conducted knew each other quite well but were not necessarily close friends. They were also seen as individuals who were expressive and were forthcoming in talking about various issues. Therefore, the selection of the participants was essentially driven by some key pragmatic and methodological considerations.

4.4 Conducting the Focus Groups

In this section, I discuss some salient aspects of the focus group sessions that I conducted for this research. I begin by discussing some important issues related to the substantive content of the discussion that took place in the sessions. I then discuss my role in the process.

4.4.1 Language used in the Focus Group Sessions

All focus groups were conducted in English. Before each session, I gave the participants the option to speak either in Urdu or English. However, all participants in all sessions chose to speak in English. Occasionally, they used Urdu words and phrases which I translated into English while transcribing the sessions.

4.4.2 The Substantive Focus of Discussions in Various Focus Groups

The data for the study was collected over a period of four years from 2005 to 2008. This was a turbulent time in world politics, especially the aspects of it relevant to the main focus of my study. This period in my research was also interesting in terms of its emerging focus and my own development and progress as a researcher. In fact, the extraordinary and significant events that unfolded on the international stage which

also had a direct bearing on Pakistan significantly shaped the final focus of this study and are reflected in the topic guides used for different focus group sessions for this study. (An example is provided in the Appendix.) These factors had a significant influence over the design of the focus group sessions and the direction that the discussion in each session took. The key issues that were discussed in each session were affected by some of the momentous events that unfolded on the national and international stage at that time. For example, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007 significantly influenced the discussion that took place in the focus groups conducted during 2008, and it was initiated by the participants themselves, without any suggestion from me. Table 4.2 shows a timeline of focus groups for my research in relation to some important, relevant international events.

Table 4.2 – A timeline of focus groups for this study and important international events.

	Dates	Key National and International Events Preceding the Focus Group and Issues Discussed during the Sessions
<i>Events</i>	<i>September 2001 to March 2005</i>	Key National and International Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>September 2001 – Attacks on iconic US targets</i> • <i>December 2001 – US led coalition attacked Afghanistan</i> • <i>March 2003 – US led coalition of the willing attacked Iraq</i> • <i>June 2004 – Drone strikes began in Pakistan’s tribal areas</i>
Focus Group 1	March 2, 2005	Issues Discussed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 911 attacks & US led war on terror ◦ US hegemony & imperialism ◦ ‘war on terror’ in relation to international law and the UN Charter ◦ the partition of India & the creation of Pakistan ◦ narrow and inflexible history curricula ◦ legitimate authority in international relations ◦ national sovereignty ◦ social inequality & capitalism ◦ social inequality in Pakistan ◦ democracy in Pakistan
<i>Events</i>	<i>March 2005 to September 2006</i>	Key National and International Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The ‘war on terror’ continues.</i> • <i>Low-level hostilities continue between Pakistan and India.</i> • <i>Although this was a highly volatile time for the region and the world at large, no major new national or international events took place immediately before the focus group that might have had a bearing on the issues that were discussed.</i>
Focus Group 2	September 2006	Issues Discussed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ two nation theory and Pakistan ◦ Pakistan-India Conflicts ◦ ethical warfare & terrorism ◦ US anti-Muslim policies

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ conspiracy theories re 911 attacks ◦ US imperialism
<i>Events</i>	<i>September 2006 to October 2007</i>	<i>Same as for focus group 2.</i>
Focus Group 3	October 2007	<p style="text-align: center;">Issues Discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ poverty & feudalism in Pakistan ◦ being a Muslim means being a terrorist? ◦ terrorism and Islam ◦ use of violence should be the last resort ◦ some terrorists are brainwashed ◦ terrorism and conventional wars ◦ the Kashmir dispute
<i>Events</i>	<i>October 2007 to February 2008</i>	<p style="text-align: center;">Key National and International Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The ‘war on terror’ continues.</i> • <i>Low-level hostilities continue between Pakistan and India.</i> • <i>November 2007 – A state of emergency declared by General Musharraf</i> • <i>A sharp rise in terrorism in Pakistan</i> • <i>Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in December 2007.</i>
Focus Group 4	February 14, 2008	<p style="text-align: center;">Issues Discussed during the Focus Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ conspiracy theories re 911 ◦ US imperialism ◦ the ‘war on terror’ ◦ rising insecurity in Pakistan ◦ Pakistan-India conflicts ◦ Pakistan & the ‘war on terror’ (PK was forced) ◦ US anti-Pakistan agenda ◦ national sovereignty ◦ lack of upright & capable political leaders ◦ Benazir Bhutto’s assassination ◦ deteriorating security situation in Pakistan ◦ Pakistan and poverty ◦ dysfunctional democracy in Pakistan
<i>Events</i>	<i>February 2008 to September 2008</i>	<p style="text-align: center;">Key National and International Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The ‘war on terror’ continues.</i> • <i>Low-level hostilities continue between Pakistan and India.</i> • <i>A high level of terrorist violence continued in Pakistan.</i> • <i>February 18, 2008 – general elections held in Pakistan</i> • <i>Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) led government took over in March 2008.</i> • <i>August 2008 – General Musharraf resigned under the threat of imminent impeachment</i> • <i>September 6, 2008 – the husband of the slain PPP leader Benazir Bhutto’s husband Asif Ali Zardari was elected to the office of the President of Pakistan</i>
Focus Group 5	September 25, 2008	<p style="text-align: center;">Issues Discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ ‘war on terror’ ◦ US imperialism ◦ US’s anti-Islam agenda

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ conspiracy theories re 911 ◦ terrorism ◦ 'war on terror' ◦ 'war on terror' & international law ◦ lack of competent and honest politicians ◦ dysfunctional democracy in Pakistan ◦ Pakistan army is not corrupt
Events	September 2008 to December 2008	<p>Key National and International Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The 'war on terror' continues.</i> • <i>Low-level hostilities continue between Pakistan and India.</i> • <i>A high level of terrorist violence continued in Pakistan.</i> • <i>November 3, 2008 – Barack Obama won the US presidential elections</i> • <i>November 26, 2008 – Key targets in Mumbai attacked by terrorist, allegedly supported by Pakistan.</i>
Focus Group 6	December 2, 2008	<p>Issues Discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ conspiracy theories re 911 ◦ US's anti-Muslim World agenda ◦ 'war on terror' ◦ US imperialism ◦ national sovereignty ◦ Pakistan's deteriorating security situation ◦ Pakistan as a nuclear power ◦ Lack of committed honest and upright leaders in Pakistan ◦ 'war on terror' has isolated Pakistan ◦ endemic poverty & the gap between rich & poor in Pakistan ◦ partition of India and the creation of Pakistan ◦ Pakistanis have a bad image overseas ◦ Pakistan-India conflicts ◦ 2008 Mumbai bombings by terrorists

The data collected through the focus groups reflects on the one hand the rapid changes and turbulent developments in international politics and on the other the emerging focus of the study and very importantly my development as a researcher. For example, in the first couple of focus groups the discussion mainly revolved around the participants' construction of morality and a sense of right and wrong and their views on the use of violence. However, in the subsequent focus groups the discussion focused more specifically around September 11 attacks and the events on the international scene in the wake of these attacks. In the initial focus groups I thought that talking about personal morality would be a good way of introducing wider issues of morality in international conflicts. However, the early focus groups tended to be about occasions when the participants had been 'naughty' rather than genuine moral issues, and that there seemed to be little in common between what they said about

personal and international issues. Therefore, I decided to drop the personal bit, which took up a lot of time, and focus more strongly on international conflicts.

I amended the topic guide for each new focus group as a result of reflecting on my experience of conducting previous sessions and the rapidly changing international geopolitical situation. In some of the later focus groups the assassination of Benazir Bhutto and the deteriorating security situation in Pakistan formed the substantive foci of the discussions. I have included as appendix 1 the complete transcript of the fourth focus group, conducted soon after Bhutto's assassination, as an example.

The substantive content of each focus group discussion was influenced by the emerging focus of my research, which in turn was influenced by some of the then recent key political events, and also by the interest and preoccupations of the participants. These labile foci of the focus group sessions have significant implication for my thesis as a whole. Very importantly, they reveal the contingent and located nature of study as it was significantly influenced by my own evolving research interests, the preoccupations of the participants, and also the volatile events that unfolded on the international and national scenes during the years when the data for this was collected. I feel using focus groups as the instrument of data collection was also suitable because of the reason that the focus of the study developed and evolved along the way. The very nature of the focus group method makes it conducive for investigations that are tentative and emergent in nature (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). This is because along with the reflective practice of the researcher, the dynamics of the focus groups give significant freedom to the participants, which in turn helps the researcher to continually realign and refine the focus of the subsequent discussions. Barbour (2005) also alludes to this feature of focus groups in the context of medical education research. She discusses how focus groups have been used by other researchers to identify items for inclusion in a subsequent survey.

Thus, focus groups by their very nature allow a degree of flexibility that is seldom possible in other methods of data collection, including the individual interview. The initial focus group sessions that I conducted helped me develop a focus for my study that became its key preoccupation: How do middle class young people construct their understanding of the contemporary international conflict? Krueger and Casey (2009)

also support this use of focus groups to develop a clearer understanding of the issues at hand. Commenting on this they write (2009: 8):

There are three points in the development of a product or program when focus groups are helpful. At the first point, focus groups are used by the researcher to gain understanding—to see the issue (for example, breastfeeding, recycling, getting a mortgage) through the eyes and hearts of the target audience. The researcher's goal with these focus groups is to learn how a target audience sees, understands and values a particular topic and to learn the language used to talk about the topic.

In the first focus group the discussion revolved mainly around issues of right and wrong and their views on Jihad (the Arabic term for holy war). In the subsequent sessions the issue of terrorism and the international conflict in the wake of September 11 attacks occupied a more central position in the discussion.

The full transcript of Focus Group 4 is included in the Appendix as an example.

4.4.3 My Role in the Focus Groups

As mentioned above, I chose focus groups as the method of data collection due the specific advantages they brought to the study by closely mirroring the actual social situations in which the participants of the study would have discussed issues relevant to the key focus of my research. Moreover, the fact that in the sessions a group of young people discussed the issues amongst themselves shifted the power balance somewhat in their favour. Notwithstanding these and other potential advantages, my presence in the focus group sessions had a significant impact on the course and the substantive content of the discussions. Qualitative research instead of purporting to be value neutral and unaffected by the person of researcher acknowledges and even celebrates the subjectivity of the researcher. The data collected in a research study does not appear from a vacuum. In fact all data is generated in response to conscious planning and intervention by the researcher. Commenting on this Holliday (2007: 133) writes:

The accounts and talk produced by the people in the research setting are done so in response to the elicitations of the researcher and then incorporated into her own narrative.

Therefore, even though the participants had the flexibility and freedom to steer the discussion themselves, the broad parameters of the discussion were determined by me. Their discussions started as a direct response to the questions that I asked. Had I asked different questions I am sure the ensuing discussion would have been significantly different. My influence was not restricted merely to the framing of the questions. My interventions during the course of the discussions also had an impact on the data that was generated. In the earlier focus groups, my interventions were more frequent and directing. This was partly due to my own professional background as a teacher, head teacher, and principal. It was only gradually during the course of the fieldwork that I developed the skill of limited intervention and being less 'teacherly'. The following explanation by me in the first focus group conducted in school A demonstrates my inclination to talk to and guide the participants as a teacher would.

Naveed: But I feel every human being has...at some point or the other, he or she feels, yes, that was something I shouldn't have done. Or that something I did was wrong. I think it is part of being a human that...

As I progressed with my research, I learned to resist the urge to offer explanations and unintentionally direct the participants in certain directions. Limited intervention from me in the later sessions led to more spontaneous and natural discussions in the focus groups.

4.5 Transcription and Analysis

In this section, I discuss the process of transcribing the discussions that took place during the focus group sessions. Subsequently, I briefly outline the procedure that I adopted to analyse the transcribed data.

4.5.1 The Transcription of the Focus Group Sessions

The discussion in each focus group was recorded using a tape recorder. The participants were informed about the purpose of the sessions and also the fact that the discussion would be recorded. The focus groups lasted on average for a duration of about 75 minutes each. The whole discussion in each focus group was later transcribed verbatim by me. I found this to be the most difficult aspect of the process of data collection. This was because it took extremely long to transcribe each session. The transcription of a focus group that lasted an hour and half took approximately 15 to 18

hours. This was because of the very nature of a focus group session. Since I wanted the participants to 'freely' and 'naturally' engage and interact with one another and also due to the nature of the topic, the participants, very often, became quite passionately involved in the discussion and interrupted, challenged, and built on what other individuals said. Therefore, determining who said what at times became quite challenging during the transcription stage. Parts of the discussion I had to replay numerous times to accurately understand the details. This made the process quite difficult and laborious. At the time when the focus groups were conducted, I was working fulltime and the transcription of the recorded sessions was possible only over the weekends and, therefore, the transcription of each session stretched over several weeks.

I decided not to employ a transcriber because of a number of reasons. The most important was the fact that if I was at places finding it hard to understand and transcribe what was said then this problem would have been amplified much more for a person who was not present during the discussion. Also, transcribing the focus groups also gave me an opportunity to familiarise myself with the data. Krueger and Casey (2009) also recommend that when possible moderators should transcribe the focus group sessions themselves as it would allow them to gain a greater degree of familiarity with the data. Notwithstanding the hard work, transcribing the sessions helped me become familiar with the data, which might not have been possible if someone else had done the transcription.

4.5.2 Data Analysis

I analysed the data that I collected using the method of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis has gained popularity as a method of qualitative data analysis in the last couple of decades (Daymon and Holloway, 2002/2011). It 'is a set of broad methodological principles' (Daymon & Holloway, 2002/2011: 165) that is used to analyse and interpret various forms of linguistic data. There are variations in the way the term is understood and used. However, there is a broad consensus that the method is used to make sense of 'social life through language and social practice' (Daymon & Holloway, 2002/2011: 165). In this study, I have used the method as suggested by Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor (2003: 200) who write:

Discourse analysis [which] is concerned with the way knowledge is produced within a particular discourse through the use of distinctive language (for example, legal discourse, medical discourse) or through the adoption of implicit theories in order to make sense of social action (for example, poverty, power, gender relations). Discourse analysis may also focus on what is going on in interaction in terms of performances, linguistic styles, rhetorical devices and ways in which talk and text set out to convince and compete with alternative accounts.

I tried to make sense of what the participants said during the focus group sessions by identifying the discourses that they may have been drawing upon or the counter-discourses that they employed to resist or challenge certain hegemonic constructions of international conflicts.

The data that I collected through the focus group sessions was quite comprehensive and rich. Therefore, I needed to devise a strategy to manage and reduce the data. The analysis of data comprised two stages. First, I identified key issues discussed by the participants. This required me to read and reread the data several times in order to make sure that the broad areas that I had identified related closely to the original data and I did not miss out any key issues. Once I had identified the broad areas, I examined these in greater detail as they occurred in different transcripts. This helped me identify key themes within each broad area. Once I had identified the themes, I coded each one of these. After doing this, I read through the transcript of each focus group and identified where each of the theme occurred. I created an index of key themes by recording in excel tables the page numbers of the transcripts where different themes occurred in each of the six focus group sessions. I did this to ensure that my analysis was grounded in the data itself.

In the second stage of the analysis process, I used the key themes that I identified to structure the analysis of the data. In order to develop an explanatory account for each of the themes, I then revisited the data and reflected more closely on what was being said. In order to develop the explanatory accounts, I examined what was being said by the participants in relation to the key themes that I had already teased out; I subsequently used the key discourses related to international conflicts that were in wide circulation at the time of the fieldwork, some of which have been outlined in

chapter three, to identify the discourses and the counter-discourses that the participants may have been drawing upon.

4.6 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations are important for all research studies no matter which research paradigm is used. However, these become all the more significant in qualitative research due to the flexible structure of the research design and its potential for generating rich and, at times, unanticipated insights (Lewis, 2003). Therefore, it is quite critical for anyone undertaking qualitative research to keep the ethical dimension of the study at the fore at all stages of the project. Throughout my collection of data, I adhered to the principle of informed consent. First and foremost the schools where the focus groups were conducted were given detailed information about the purposes of the research, what will be required from the participants and how the collected information will be used. All the schools where the data was collected had a strong tradition of teachers carrying out small scale investigation for their own professional and academic development. Therefore, the headteachers were quite comfortable with the idea of a colleague coming in to collect data for academic research. This made the whole process of gaining access significantly easier to negotiate. The schools identified and selected the participants of the focus group on the basis of voluntary participation from the students. Once the students accepted to the invitation to participate, the headteacher informed and asked for consent from the parents of the participants.

As discussed above, much of the process of informed consent had already taken place before the actual sessions. However, before beginning each session, I gave to the participants a detailed introduction to the research study, explaining the purpose of the research, how the data will be used, and very importantly that all information would be made anonymous. They were also given the option to opt out at any stage of the research process, including after the focus groups had been conducted. They were also informed that to retain the richness and detail of the discussions the sessions would be recorded. Before switching on the voice recorder, I asked the participants if they were happy to have the session to be recorded. The actual sessions only began once the participants were fully satisfied and had a good understanding of the research study. In most sessions the students asked questions about academic aspects of the research and the experience of doing a PhD, especially from a UK university.

These questions from the participants were important because, as mentioned earlier, they all belonged to middle class families and a significant proportion of them aspired to pursue higher education overseas.

It is quite interesting to note that none of the participants in any of the focus groups decided to withdraw from the research. However, it is possible that the participants found it difficult to withdraw because they saw the sessions as a school activity and me as an authority figure. They all seemed quite eager to participate and wanted to know more about the research project. This fact further augments the locatedness and contingent nature of my study. Had I conducted this research in any other type of educational institution the response of the school leaders, the participants and their parents could have been quite different which would have had significant implications on the data that would have been collected. I will, therefore, try to be careful about any claims that I will make because they will be specific to the circumstances in which this study was carried out.

All references to the young people who participated in my research and the schools where the focus group sessions took place were made anonymous. I did this to make sure that no one will be able to trace either the research participants or the schools where the data were collected.

I encountered another dilemma during the focus group sessions. This related to the decision whether to intervene and correct when one or more participants said something that was either factually incorrect or was based on unreliable evidence. Had I been *only* a researcher this decision would have been comparatively easier. I could have easily justified myself that my role was simply to collect the data. However, since all the participants saw me a figure of authority, this decision was much more complicated. I decided to resist the urge to correct what the participants said because doing so would have inhibited the discussion and would have compromised the authenticity and richness of the data. Notwithstanding my decision to do so, it posed a significant professional dilemma for me.

4.7 The Strength and Limitations of the Research Design

In this section, I briefly discuss some of the key strengths and limitations of my research. I was interested in finding out how young people construct their

understanding of contemporary international conflicts. Doing focus group sessions with a sample of young people gave me a detailed and thorough insight into how they constructed their accounts of key aspects of contemporary international conflicts. I was able to capture what they said in their interactions with one another, which to a significant extent replicated the natural environments in which they constructed their positions on such matters. I was also able to see which of the discourses and counter-discourses, which were in wide circulation at the time of the fieldwork, the research participants drew or did not draw upon. Therefore, this research helped get an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of how the young people who participated in my study constructed their understanding of contemporary international conflicts.

Like any research study, my study has some limitations. Like most qualitative research, my study is based on small sample that was purposively selected. Therefore, it cannot be said to be representative of all Pakistani young people. Had this study been carried out with another group of young people, especially those attending another type of educational institution like the state schools or the madrassas, the findings would have been significantly different. The focus groups for this research were carried out at different points in time when a lot was happening in world politics. Therefore, different issues were discussed in different focus groups. Another limitation of the study was that because it employed focus groups, it was not possible to quantify or report in depth about what individual participants said. This also constrained the opportunities for contextualizing what individuals said against their personal life histories. Moreover, in focus group research there is the issue of one or more participants dominating or leading the discussion. Finally, my personal life story worked as strength as well as a limitation. The former because being from the same cultural background or being an 'insider' allowed me to interpret the data at a level of sophistication which otherwise would have been difficult. The latter because at places I might have made assumptions which a person from another cultural background might not have made.

4.8 The Structure of the Data Chapters

Chapter five discusses the participants' constructions of Pakistan. Doing this was important because this formed the prism through which they looked at the wider world. Chapter six analyses their constructions of the wider world and the

international space. The next three chapters focus on conflicts. Chapter seven examines the participants' constructions of the causes and conduct of the Pakistan-India conflict. Chapter eight analyses their constructions of the causes and conduct of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US, and chapter nine addresses the 'war on terror'.

5 Constructions of Pakistan

In this chapter, I discuss the participants' constructions of Pakistan and their perception of their country's role in international politics against the backdrop of geopolitical circumstances prevailing at that time. Given that there is a discourse of hierarchy of nations, as discussed in chapter 3, it is important to analyse their perceptions of their own country and its place in the world. Moreover, in order to contextualise the participants' constructions of international conflicts, it is helpful to look at their constructions of Pakistan – where all of them lived at the time of the research and with which they had a close, albeit, at times, ambivalent, relation.

The participants' constructions of Pakistan were varied and complex. It is hard to summarise their constructions of the country because of the variation in their accounts and the multiplicity of discourses that they used to describe it. However, I aim to outline some key themes that were discussed in relation to Pakistan. Hopefully, these themes will help in bringing to the fore how these young people viewed their country from the perspective of their own everyday lived experiences and also against the wider backdrop of international politics. As I have discussed in chapter 1, issues related to international politics gained greater salience in the lives of ordinary Pakistanis ever since Pakistan started playing a key role in the so called 'war on terror' and the violent repercussions of doing so started becoming increasingly obvious.

As mentioned in chapter 4, the fieldwork was carried out in the cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, situated in the northern half of the country. Both the cities are geographically located within the province of Punjab. The research participants were cognisant of the variation and diversity of the people inhabiting different parts of the country and tried to position themselves as moderates. For example, Adil (M, FG4) said that people in the Punjab and Sind were 'moderate' and 'the problem lies ... in the North ...'

Significant references to Pakistan were made in all six focus groups, even though specific questions regarding it were asked in only the last three. A significant part of the data discussed in this chapter rather than coming out of questions focussing explicitly on Pakistan was sifted out of general discussions that took place in the focus

group sessions. I reproduce below the specific questions related to Pakistan that I asked in various sessions.

- What do you think of the way Pakistan has played its role in the war on terror since 9/11? (FG 4: February 2008)
- In your opinion what were the factors that led to the assassination of Benazir Bhutto? (FG 4: February 2008)
- Do you think it was reasonable for America to attack Afghanistan, Iraq, and now the Tribal Areas of Pakistan? (FG 5 & 6: September & December 2008)
- Pakistan in the last couple of years has seen an unprecedented increase in violence. What do you think is happening? (FG 5 & 6: September & December 2008)

In view of the above, it makes sense that I begin my discussion with how the participants of this research perceived Pakistan. I also discuss the problematic nature of their identifications or lack thereof with the country and how they viewed Pakistan's role in the conflict and the so called 'war on terror' led by the USA. Doing so is also important for another reason because as human beings we are bound to make sense of the world from a certain position and I recognise that the constructions of the young people who participated in this study were contingent and located and were the result of an exposure to a complex network of representations surrounding these conflicts and the position of Pakistan in these representations.

I begin by analysing the participants' constructions of poverty and socio-economic disparity in the country and their own privileged position within it. Then I analyse their views on the relationship between Pakistan and Islam and their own identities as Muslims. After this, I discuss their views on democracy and Pakistan. Next, I analyse their constructions of Pakistan's political leadership. In the final section, I analyse the participants' references to an important national institution – the Pakistan Army.

5.1 Poverty and Socioeconomic Disparity in Pakistan

In this section, I discuss the research participants' constructions of the wide gap between rich and poor in Pakistan; of their own socio-economic position; and of the relationship between poverty and the rise of extremism.

In four out of six focus groups, the issue of widespread poverty and social and economic inequality was brought up by the participants. It is pertinent to mention that these views about their country were expressed by the participants not in response to any direct question. The fact that this issue was discussed in these focus groups without any direct prompt from me shows that this was an important dimension in their constructions of Pakistan. Salma (F, FG 1) said:

The rich, the rich...Let's talk of the rich. In Pakistan 5% of the top, of the top cream that were rich then. This quota, percentage of people has only risen to about 6 or 7%. The rest of them some have come into the middle class, but most of them are still in the lower class, most of them are still in the working class. Those conditions have not changed. Statistically speaking, factories' working conditions have not changed, firstly.

In the above extract, Salma commented on the widespread poverty and social inequality that existed in Pakistani society. She argued that with time the situation had not improved for the vast majority of people who were still working class. Similarly, Afreen (F, FG 3), said: 'The living standards are just not enough – forget enough they're not even, you know – the basic, the common man, he cannot lead his life.'

Hafsa (F, FG3), said that Pakistan was still a feudal society with the local feudal lords controlling all the local resources in the rural communities and, thus, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and social deprivation. She said that the vast majority of ordinary people in the rural areas were at the mercy of the feudal chiefs who she said 'have the poor people come to them and they beat them to have them agree with them.' The issue of the perpetuation of the feudal system has often been highlighted as the underlying cause of many problems confronting the country, including poverty (Haqqani, 2006; Shuja, 2007). For example, Haqqani (2006) cites the persistence of the feudal system as one of the main causes of entrenched poverty in Pakistan. He argues that the feudal lords who traditionally have dominated the political leadership in the country have tried to maintain status quo with the vast majority of the local population continuing to be dependent on them for their bare subsistence. Kleiner (2007: 12) maintains that nearly two thirds of people in Pakistan live below the poverty line and any patchy improvements in the economy 'did not trickle down to the country's poor.'

Widespread poverty was an issue that was mentioned by many research participants. Aan (F, FG6) said 'We have so much poverty in our country that in order to get fame and money we have to do all these vices.' Aan made this comment in the context of the sharp increase in the socio-economic and political problems faced by Pakistan in the first decade of the 21st century. Against this backdrop of excessive poverty in the country, they constructed their own positions as privileged. Salma (F, FG1) said:

Secondly, rich who work...okay, I, for example, am not studying in this school group - if I were in a government school, I would have never applied to Yale, I would have never applied to Harvard. I don't think, if I go to America and come back with a degree – I am intelligent enough, I am exposed enough, I am equipped enough to start my own company – I start my own business – that's where the rich factor comes in, I start getting rich, I start getting business.

Paul Willis (1977) provides an incisive analysis of how middle class children end up in middle class jobs and how working class children end up doing working class jobs. He argues that that a range of complex factors come together to perpetuate this seemingly anomalous state of affairs. One of these is the fact that middle and working class children develop essentially different relationships with their schools. Clearly, in a society like Pakistan where the education system is highly stratified, children attending private schools come from the affluent middle class and usually have high aspirations for their future academic and working careers. Salma was clearly aware of the head start that her private education gave her in terms of her future academic and career prospects. The private schools in Pakistan are seen by the vast majority of the people as offering better education, ultimately leading to better career prospects. Nearly all private schools in the country use English as the medium of instruction and are seen as the passport to economic prosperity and material security in later life. Salma argued that when she would return from the US after completing her education, she would be ready to embark upon a successful career. This she said would not be due to any inherent quality within her per se but rather due to the social advantage that she had as a result of being from small, privileged class within the highly unequal Pakistani society. As discussed in chapter 4, the already deep social divisions in Pakistani society are further exacerbated by the parallel systems of education (Ghazi et al., 2010).

In Pakistan an important indicator of the social position of a young person is the school s/he attends. Since all the research participants attended an upper middle class private school, they said that they were aware of their position within the socioeconomic hierarchy. Huma (F, FG6) said:

We have two extremes in Pakistan – there are completely rich ones and then there are the totally poor ones. We don't experience the poverty; we don't know what hunger is; we don't know what deprivation is. We cannot say how much poverty there is in the country. The point is we have everything and there is a 50% of the population who doesn't have anything.

Salma (F, FG1) argued that a person's success in life, to a very significant extent, was dependent on the social environment in which they grow up. She said:

The one thing that was important was the environment that I grew up in. There are exceptions; we always say that there are many exceptions. But in the majority of the cases, your interactions, your demeanour, whatever you do, that is directly the product of – can you imagine yourself out of the environment? You can't, because you are the product of your environment. So, in the majority of the cases whatever happens to you, whatever you act, happens because there is a backup to you...

Salma continued to argue that in most cases success in life depended on the social environment in which one grows up. Bourdieu (1983: 47) presents the notion of cultural capital 'to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes'. Bourdieu (1973, cited in Dumais, 2002: 44) writes:

By doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give. This consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture.

The young people who participated in my research constructed themselves as having a privileged position, and argued that the advantages they enjoyed would help them succeed in their future lives.

Some of the research participants referred to endemic poverty as one of the key reasons for the rise of terrorist activity in Pakistan. Aan (F, FG6) mentioned the extreme

poverty in the country and cited it as a reason for the rise in terrorist and militant activity in Pakistan and why some deprived people resorted to illegal practices. She said:

You know, what happens is people out here are very poor. So in order to have a lavish life and they want to give the, umm, poor and own family – comfort for the own family – they start doing all the wrong vices. They say, okay we will do this you can give us the money. And they train the people out there and they say okay you are doing jihad. Instead of telling them you are going to be killed, they do – they tell – they say we will give you this amount of money – are you ready to do all this bomb blasts, explosions? They say yes.

She went on to argue that there was a wide gap between the rich and the poor, which caused resentment amongst the latter. In order to provide for their families, they were willing to even die:

There is a lot of gap – difference – see I'm living a very comfortable life and the person who is not living a comfortable, they see our lives like this. They say why can't we give all the comforts to our children rather than having the same thing? So, they do all the wrong things which they can. They lose their lives also in it.

Aan seemed quite preoccupied with the issue of social deprivation and poverty and suggested it as one of the main causes of Pakistan's myriad problems, including its slippage into militancy and religious extremism. Various writers have highlighted poverty and social deprivation as one of the main causes of Pakistan's slide into extremism. For example Shuja (2007: 30) writes:

While many Pakistanis, especially the middle class, favor a secular state and a moderate form of Islam, growing numbers of others are calling for a theocratic Islamic state. Militant groups have presented Islam as an alternative model of political organization to Pakistani youth. Unable to find employment, a number of young Pakistanis are listening to their message.

In the same focus group as above, the participants linked poverty and religious extremism more directly and explicitly. One participant, Huma (F, FG6) argued that people in extreme poverty were easily tempted by promises of a more comfortable life:

Huma (F, FG6): They say fine, your family will be safe – your family will be as comfortable – you’re doing this for us. Those people are so hand to mouth – they’re so frustrated – they’d do anything. They agree to anything they can do to make life comfortable for themselves, for their families. **[Mysha (F):** Exactly.] It doesn’t matter – at the moment...

In the same focus group, Natasha (F, FG6) argued that due to extreme poverty and rising inflation, people found it impossible to meet their basic needs. Inability to do so made them angry and they used violence to show their frustration. She said:

Look at the inflation in our country now. Inflation is so high that it is *impossible* – it’s impossible for a poor person to even buy flour for himself – *atta* [Urdu word for flour] for himself – it’s impossible. Okay? This is why they go crazy. They did not make no mistake to deserve this. Just because they’re poor, doesn’t mean that they won’t be able to live – they won’t be able to get food. That’s why they’re angry. They want to show their anger. And they want to tell the people that look – look at us – we’re not getting any food, we’re not getting any electricity, we’re not – where are we? Are we still in the Stone Age?

Huma and Natasha traced the origin of various types of violence and aggression, including terrorist violence, to poverty and social deprivation. As mentioned above, this is a credible thesis that has been discussed and documented by various writers, both of Pakistani and Western origins (e.g. Chomsky, 2007; Qadir 2001). Qadir (2001: 338-9) reporting his research on ‘international terrorism’ wrote:

From my study, presently confined to Pakistan (and, to some extent, of Afghanistan), it is apparent that the bulk of the people that enter such seminaries and, later take to ‘Jihad’, belong to the deprived class. They are, as I stated earlier, from families which cannot afford to feed or house them. The parents find it convenient to admit them to seminaries, where they are housed, fed, clothed and educated. The parents are content that their children are dedicated to the Almighty, the young children go the way they are taught.

The participants described Pakistan as a country that was sharply divided along the lines of income and economic prosperity. They acknowledged their own privileged situation. They said that a very large proportion of the population was desperately

poor and did not have means for even bare subsistence. They identified this as one of the major underlying causes of the problems that confronted the country, including deteriorating law and order and the dangerous slide into militancy and religious extremism in Pakistan in the first decade of the 21st century.

5.2 The Islamic Basis of the Pakistani State and the Muslim Identities of the Participants

In this section, I discuss the participants' constructions of the relationship between the state of Pakistan and Islam and their own identities as Muslims. During five out of the six focus group sessions, references, howsoever tangential and brief, were made to the relationship of the State of Pakistan to Islam. In many instances, this was in the context of the creation of the country in 1947 when the Indian subcontinent gained independence and the British Government agreed to divide it into two sovereign nations – Pakistan and India. As mentioned in chapter 3, Pakistan is one of the only two countries in the world that were created on the basis of religion. In the following extract the participants were discussing the longstanding issue of Kashmir – a source of major contention between the Pakistan and India:

Fahad (M): ... if you look at British plans for the partition of India, you really find out that Kashmir is actually part of Pakistan.

Fareeha (F): Exactly!

Harris (M): But, India does not look at it this way –

Fareeha (F): The point is that if you look at history, there are records, which tell, it was to be part of Pakistan.

Harris (M): Yes, it was to be – the majority was Muslim –

Fareeha (F): Yes, the majority *was* Muslim. You're not talking of, that's where—evidence is there that Kashmir basically belongs to Pakistan!

(FG2)

In the early 20th century, in the wake of the rising Indian nationalism and the increasingly vociferous demands by the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League to quit India and divide and quit India respectively, the British Government finalized the division and independence of British India through the Indian Independence Act 1947 (Emory, 2012). As per the partition plan of the British

Government, Muslim majority areas became the independent dominion of Pakistan and the Hindu majority areas became the independent dominion of India. British India at the time of partition also comprised many princely states of which Jammu and Kashmir was one (Akhtar, 2010). Kashmir at the time of partition was ruled by a Hindu prince who delayed the decision to accede to either Pakistan or India. However, later on he decided to accede to India. This indication by the Hindu Raja of Kashmir created a lot of anxiety within Pakistan because the Pakistan Government expected it to accede to Pakistan, since 78% of the Kashmiri population comprised Muslims (Akhtar, 2010). Figure 5.1 (Boundless, 2013) highlights the demarcation of British India into two independent dominions and the location of the princely state of Kashmir.



Figure 5.1 – The Division of British India into Independent Dominions and the Location of the Princely State of Kashmir

In the above excerpt, Fahad and Fareeha argued that Kashmir was lawfully part of Pakistan because it was a Muslim majority area. The discourse that Kashmir should lawfully be part of Pakistan is dominant in the country and is predicated on the so called 'two nation theory' that is often used as the *raison d'être* for the creation of Pakistan through the division of British India into two separate sovereign countries.

From my own experience of growing up in Pakistan, I know that the mainstream discourse of Pakistani nationalism constructs Pakistan as a state predicated on the 'two nation theory', carved out for the Muslims of India. People of this school of thought argue that the Indian subcontinent was partitioned into two independent countries because two separate nations lived in it who found it increasingly difficult to harmoniously coexist with one another.

The mainstream discourse about the Kashmir issue posits that the region should be part of Pakistan because of its overwhelming Muslim population – the criteria used by the British Government for demarcating the boundaries of the two independent dominions created out of united India. For example Mohan (1992: 283) writes: 'Pakistan contends that, since the majority of the Kashmiri people is Muslim, they naturally belong with an Islamic state like Pakistan.'

This discourse is also adopted and endorsed by the history textbooks in the country (e.g. Rabbani, 2009). In their discussion, Fahad and Fareeha, constructed Pakistan as a Muslim State and because the majority of the people in Kashmir was Muslim, it should have been part of Pakistan. However, Harris tried to look at it from a more neutral perspective by trying to acknowledge that India did not look at the situation in that way.

It should be noted that the participants' constructions of the Islamic bases of Pakistan were complex and varied. Some participants took positions that were quite similar to the mainstream discourse in Pakistan and the one that is inevitably communicated in the official textbooks in the country (e.g. Khan, 2004; Rabbani, 2009). On the other hand, some participants had a somewhat different take on the issue. For example, Wafa (F, FG 2), like Harris in the above extract, took a somewhat different position on the disputed region of Kashmir: 'The way I really look at this is that, it's like, it's just disputed.' Instead of talking of it as being rightfully part of Pakistan, she referred to it as simply 'disputed'. Her assertion does not unequivocally endorse the mainstream

ideology of 'two nation theory' that posits a taken for granted relationship between the Pakistani State and Islam. The dispute with India over Kashmir is more often than not articulated using various discourses of religion. It is interesting to note that Wafa had lived a significant part of her life in the US. She and her family moved back to Pakistan six years before the research for this study was carried out. She was born in the US where she completed her primary school and part of her secondary school. The mainstream discourse about Kashmir in the country, endorsed by the official textbooks, takes an essentialist view of the matter and argues that Kashmir is rightfully part of the Pakistani State. Therefore, the somewhat different views of a young Pakistani, who lived a significant part of her life in the West, are noteworthy because it was likely that she would not have come across, at least in the early stages of her schooling, the dominant discourses about the Kashmir, predicated on a religious ideology, which circulate through the media and the school curricula in Pakistan.

The substantive content as well as the general tone of discussions about matters like the Kashmir dispute and the ideological basis of Pakistan were in contrast to views expressed on similar issues during the focus group sessions conducted by Durrani and Dunne (2010) with state school children in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. The children in their study expressed more essentialist and inflexible views about such matters. Reproduced below is what one male student in one of the focus groups conducted by Durrani and Dunne (2010: 228) said:

Asghar (RB): India occupied Kashmir. Fighting is still going on there. Muslims are in the majority and Hindus in the minority there but the Hindus are powerful. We should send our army and weapons there to keep the Kashmiris going. This way Kashmir can be liberated.

The views expressed by Asghar in the above extract are in contrast with those aired by most participants in my study. Whereas Fareeha (F, FG2) and Harris (M, FG2) argued that Kashmir should have been lawfully part of Pakistan, nowhere did they recommend a military solution to the problem. Asghar, on the other hand, in the above excerpt, took an essentialist and view of the dispute between Pakistan and India and argued for an overt military action to keep the Kashmiris 'going' and ultimately getting Kashmir 'liberated'. Notwithstanding the different approach to the Kashmir issue taken by the participants of my research, they drew on the 'two nation theory', predicated on the

Islamic identity of the Pakistani state and used it to argue for Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.

There were also other references to the Islamic basis of the Pakistani State. For example, Babur (M, FG5) commenting on the General Pervez Musharraf's idea of 'enlightened moderation' – the term introduced to counter the perception about the rising fundamentalism in the country – said:

There is another reason for this increase in violence is that whenever you destroy your cultural values in the name of enlightened moderation, you know, there are people who are conservative and you have to care for them. You know, they are there, and they are a reality. You know, if you start destroying it in such a short time, you know, this will happen. And it will happen in every country. You know, the Americans and the, umm, the British they have evolved over a period of, you know, centuries. And we say that we should get modernized and all that in just ten or eight years – this is impossible. And this will destroy the entire basis of our society.

In the above extract, while talking about the then recent upsurge of violence in Pakistan, Babur said that the destruction of the cultural values, driven by a desire to modernise, contributed to an increase in violence. He referred to the policy of 'enlightened moderation' advocated by the government of the military dictator General Musharraf. This policy of 'enlightened moderation' was taken by the conservative sections of society as a euphemism used by the Musharraf government for its unconditional support for the US and hence abandoning the ideological moorings of the country which they saw as essentially Islamic. Babur linked the rise in violence to government's policy of 'enlightened moderation'. Such views have also been expressed by some Western writers. For example, Schofield (2009: 244) writes:

So, when evaluating Pakistan's evolution as a democracy, we must realize how diverse its society is. We are fooling ourselves if we think that a country which has conservative traditional societies is going to become democratic overnight, or even in 60 years.

Salma (F, FG1) challenged the way history was taught in the school curricula. She argued that there were no opportunities to discuss ideas like the 'two nation theory':

...you read about how Pakistan was formed, you read about the bloodshed and the massacres. And considering that, the independence concept, the whole independence concept, you don't discuss the intellectual aspects of that, you don't discuss the two nation theory, you don't discuss the implications of that, you don't discuss that! ... I remember, a page on the two nation theory – we were supposed to remember that, we were supposed to write about that. And we were not allowed to discuss it. We never get analytical questions on discussing, whether the partition was right or not, whether independence was right or not.

Salma's critique of the way history is taught in schools was bold and unorthodox, given the fact that she had studied all her life in Pakistan, where debating the 'two nation theory' would ordinarily be considered out of bounds because on the one hand it is predicated on Islamic ideology and on the other it is seen as the *raison d'être* for the creation of Pakistan. Durrani (2008) and Durrani & Dunne (2010) argue that Islam is presented as the key marker of national identity in school textbooks. This they posit is due to the fact that, like many postcolonial countries, the Pakistani state was created before the Pakistani nation came together and there was an urgent need to create a discourse of shared nationalism. The 'two nation theory' plays an important role in creating this shared sense of nationalism. Durrani (2008: 597) writes:

The melding of religious and national identities is ... evident in the construction of the Pakistani nation. Pakistan was created on the discourse of 'two-nation theory' which constructed Indian Muslims as a homogenous nation and in bipolar opposition to Hindus ... Islam has therefore been widely promulgated as a source of legitimacy and coherence for the Pakistani state.

All schools, including private, are required to teach history textbooks either provided or approved by the official textbook boards. The 'two nation theory' is presented as a sacrosanct ideology in these books (e.g. Khan, 2004; Rabbani, 2009). Therefore, Salma's argument for providing curricular space for debating and evaluating ideas like the two nation theory and the partition of India was, indeed, bold.

For all participants of my research, Islam was an important dimension in the way they constructed their worlds. They made references to Islam in a variety of contexts and while talking about different issues. However, in most cases they did not use Islamic discourses to construct their personal identities. For example, Farah (F, FG4) said that

in response to the September 11 attacks, the US was waging a war against 'Islamic countries'. Komal (F, FG4) said that she would be reluctant to go to the US for higher education because she was 'not an extremist but ... could be looked upon as one'. She said that 'post-911 [there were] more stricter rules on Muslims'.

Fahad (M, FG2) while talking about ethical warfare said:

'Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) never did that [fight wars for acquisition of wealth]. Hazrat Omar [the second caliph of Islam after the Prophet] when he used to conquer, he used to pray in the church'.

Thus, most participants used Islamic discourses to construct accounts of different aspects of the world. They seldom used such discourses to articulate their own personal identities. In most cases, they used Islamic discourses to make sense of the world around them.

However, a couple of participants in focus group 3 stood out from all other participants as they explicitly and rhetorically used the discourse of Islam to construct their own identities:

Afreen (F): . . . every single Muslim person – citizens of England, citizens of America – wherever Muslims are living – the only misunderstanding is that they have to choose between their nationality and their religion. I am a dual national – so, being a British I am a terrorist, but being Pakistani I am a terrorist too! But if being a terrorist means being a Muslim then I'll put my hand up and I'll say yes I'm happy to be a terrorist – if being a terrorist means being a Muslim – because I can't change that, I don't want to change that at all ...

...

Saba (F): Because we *are* Muslims. And when they think that all Muslims are terrorists then fine they can call us terrorists! We're fine with that – we won't deny that we're Muslims.

(FG3)

Afreen had lived all her life in England and was sent by her parents to study in Pakistan so that she would become familiar with her heritage culture. It is interesting to note that none of the other young people used Islam to construct their personal identity in such a direct and rhetorical manner. Durrani and Dunne (2010: 217) have argued that

'identity is reinforced with reference to an 'other'.' Living in a culture different from her own heritage culture could have worked to produce a stronger Muslim identity for Afreen.

Notwithstanding the rhetorical use of the discourse of Islam by Afreen and Saba to construct their identities, the way most participants in my research used Islamic discourses was quite different from the way students in Durrani and Dunne's used these. Commenting on their research participants, Durrani and Dunne (2010: 223) write:

Students defined 'being Pakistani' as 'being Muslim', by which they meant complete adherence to Islamic rituals. Students had very little to say about their Pakistani identity apart from their Muslim identity.

Thus, being Muslim was a key part of their personal identity. To summarise, the young people who participated in my research talked about Pakistan as being an Islamic state. In most cases the references to this were indirect and implicit such as drawing on the discourse of the two nation theory and critiquing the discourse of 'enlightened moderation'. Instead of drawing on the discourse of Islam to construct their personal identities, the participants of my research used the discourse of Islam as a perspective or worldview to make sense of and talk about the world around them. However, in one focus group, two participants drew on the discourse of Islam to construct their personal identities. On the whole, the use of the discourse of Islam by the participants of my research was in contrast to that in a research study carried out by Durrani and Dunne (2010) in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan, who used it as almost exclusively to construct their personal identities and also used it to argue that Kashmir should be part of Pakistan.

5.3 Democracy in Pakistan

This section discusses the participants' constructions of democracy in Pakistan, and the reasons they put forward to explain why it did not work effectively. The democratic system and the entrenched problems of the electoral process were discussed in four out of six focus group sessions, without my asking any specific questions about the matter. For example, the following discussion took place in focus group 5:

Tabish (M): Actually, people who vote don't have any thinking skills and don't have any analysis of what is going on around. They just vote for the person they're told to – they're just ordered to by the Chaudhry or Wadaira [the Urdu terms for the feudal lords in some rural areas of Pakistan]. And the people who actually have some sort of thinking or whatever, like educated people, they just sit at home.

Shehrbano: Very minute proportion of educated people who actually...

Tabish (M) and the proportion that is there doesn't actually vote; they just sit at home and enjoy the holiday.

(FG 5)

Tabish referred to the feudal system in which the local feudal lord controlled the ordinary people and forced them to vote for either himself or a person that he supported. The issue of dysfunctional democracy was often discussed in conjunction with the high level of illiteracy and an inadequate system of education in the country. Tabish gave lack of education as a cause of poor track record of democracy in the country. He argued that since the vast majority of the population in the country was uneducated, they could be easily swayed by politicians, who in many cases were the feudal lords. Either by coercion, by offering financial incentives or both, they influenced the voters in their respective constituencies. He also said that the small minority of educated people by and large remained aloof from the democratic process and did not even care to cast their votes.

Tabish's construction of the democratic system echoed the ideas expressed by local and international political commentators. For example, Schofield (2009: 247) in her article on Pakistan's democratic history said: 'leaders have only paid lip service to democratic procedures and have themselves resorted to old tribal feudal relationships of kinship.' Such views expressed by the participants on the one hand indicated that they had a sophisticated understanding of relevant issues and on the other hand revealed their middle class upbringing and the range of views they might have heard in their homes.

Haqqani (2006) argues that the persistence of the feudal system in the rural areas is a major cause of the distortions in the democratic process in Pakistan. Commenting on

the negative role played by the feudal lords in the political system, Haqqani (2006: 223-4) writes:

Politics has become a game for the rich and this is a result of the power and influence that feudals enjoy in the country. It is almost impossible for a middle-class individual to consider standing in elections. Thus has the feudal system impeded the growth of democracy in Pakistan.

Nawira (F, FG5) remarked that the problem with democracy in Pakistan was the low rate of literacy:

We have very low literacy rate, which is why – and that's why we have very little options, you know. Either it's Nawaz Sharif [two-time, former, Prime Minister of Pakistan and the leader of one of the two major political parties of the country] or it was the PPP [Pakistan People's Party – Benazir Bhutto's party].

She argued that the low literacy rate was also responsible for the domination of politics by a small group of individuals. This, according to her, seriously limited the available choice of political leaders and people had 'little options and we do not know who to vote for. I mean, everybody is confused, because everybody is involved in corruption – all our politicians are involved.' Haqqani (2006: 219-20) argues:

By indulging in corruption, these politicians have not only smeared their own reputations but have also given rise to increasing public disenchantment with politics and the political process.

Salma (F, FG1) argued that the democratic process in Pakistan did not truly reflect the will of the majority because the rich could manipulate the results:

If you have an equal footing, then you have, then you can take majority into consideration, then you can say that the majority decision is right. But, right now, for example, in elections and all of that, you can't, you can't say that majority is right, because whatever majority, that's, that's a *said* majority. A person who can put in the most money in his campaign, or the person who can exercise most influence in his area, he just comes to the front.

In the above extract, Salma problematized the notion of democracy in a country like Pakistan. She argued that democracy, based on the rule by people who have the support of the majority of the population, existed in a corrupted form in Pakistan.

According to her, the person who had the most resources and could pump in a lot of money into his campaign usually won the election. Therefore, for her, this was not true democracy as it did not reflect the true will of the majority. The process was distorted by a powerful few who controlled wealth and resources in their respective constituencies. Schofield (2009: 245) argues that it is unrealistic to expect the Pakistani polity to achieve overnight what she refers to as the 'Westminster style democracy' because:

The natural hierarchy in the order of things, at the grass-roots level and upwards, has meant, exactly as it did for us in Britain several hundred years ago, that the concept of one man, one vote, goes against customary practices, which are linked by ties of kinship and, in some regions, virtual serfdom.

(Schofield, 2009: 246)

Komal (F, FG4) argued that Pakistan was not ready for democracy:

I think, Pakistan is not ready for true democracy because the definition of democracy is here I'll pay 1500 you vote for me, I pay 2000 you vote for me too. First of all you have to change people who are actually talking about democracy. They need to know how you, let's say, exactly, what is [inaudible], what is democracy and how you make sure that people – it is a true democracy. One pays somebody to vote for me – that's not democracy!

Komal (F, FG4), like Salma (F, FG1), argued that Pakistan at that time was not ready for democracy. She referred to the fact that the person who could use money to satisfy the people in his constituency was most likely to win. Therefore, according to her, the political system in Pakistan was not real democracy. She went on to argue:

In Pakistan, 70% of our population lives in the rural areas. There you have queues of – record out numbers, let's say, for the polling. It's because they have increased 1500 to 2000 for voting for one person. And because you have record turnout it's not because people believe in their leader, it's because they can have their money to feed their children! And secondly, you just said change the mind-set, we can't, even our generation, let's say five generations down the lane, they probably won't be able to do it, because it takes...years and years.

Komal asserted that developing true democracy needed time; according to her, that may take a few generations for true democracy to take root in Pakistan. Komal's comments about the state of democracy echoed what was frequently discussed in the Pakistani and international media at that time. The authors of such views are either Western journalists or Pakistani writers most of whom hail from the (upper) middle class. Therefore, such views expressed by the participants in my research were not unexpected as they also came from upper middle class backgrounds and would have been likely to hear such views at home. An article published in *The Economist* (2011) discusses the dysfunctional nature of the democratic system in Pakistan where the parliament was full of feudal lords who once in power remained preoccupied with rewarding and looking after the people who voted them in. Pakistanis were reported as disillusioned with democracy:

Given the government's failings, it is hardly surprising if Pakistanis take a dim view of democracy. In a recent Pew poll of seven Muslim countries they were the least enthusiastic, with 42% regarding it as the best form of government...

(The Economist, 2011: no page number)

Siddiqi (2007) asserts that the feudal system helps the powerful elite to gather economic and political capital which they use to reward their supporters who help them gain access to these forms of capital in the first place.

The views expressed by Komal are also interesting because these were expressed in focus group 4 that was conducted in a school in Rawalpindi, situated only a few kilometres from the Headquarters of the Pakistan Army. Many of the pupils in this school were either the children of army officers or were from a family with some significant connection with the military. Pakistan has been under military rule for a substantial part of the time since its creation. The military, therefore, has developed considerable clout within the political system of the country (Siddiqi, 2007). The vast majority of military officers defend this position of the military by presenting pragmatic justifications for its sustained unconstitutional role in national politics and governance of the country. This may very well be one of the factors influencing the views of the pupils in this focus group. Nawira (F) in focus group 5, which was also conducted in a school in the Rawalpindi cantonment, close to the army headquarters, indirectly defended the former military president Musharraf by questioning the role

played by the Pakistani media in exposing and taking the politicians to task. She said that the media had been very vocal and vociferous in its criticism of General Pervaiz Musharraf. However, the same media and the news channels had never pointed a finger at 'Nawaz Sharif or Zardari for that matter, although they have corruption cases against them – Zardari has been in jail – is he a role model to follow?' Zardari became the leader of the Pakistan People's Party after the assassination of his wife Benazir Bhutto. He got elected as the president of the country in 2008 after Pervaiz Musharraf resigned under the threat of imminent impeachment by the parliament after the Pakistan People's Party led civilian government took office.

I did not ask the participants about their parents' occupations and their wider family connections and circumstances. However, I now feel that doing this would have revealed interesting information and would have provided useful contextual information to look at the views of the participants. Siddiqua (2007) provides a trenchant critique of the military's penetration into all aspects of the Pakistani polity. Schofield (2009) also writes that it is not uncommon in Pakistan to encounter the discourse of the country being better off under military rule.

On the whole, the young people who participated in my research were quite critical of the state of democracy in Pakistan. They argued that the democratic system as it existed in Pakistan was dysfunctional because a powerful group of elite, especially the feudal lords in the rural areas, manipulated the system to perpetuate their own stranglehold on the area. They cited illiteracy of the masses, poverty, which made people susceptible to bribes, and the corruption of the politicians as important reasons for the dysfunctional nature of democracy in the country. Some of them posited that the media were less critical of the civilian politicians as compared to the military government of General Pervez Musharraf. In the next section, I analyse the participants' constructions of the Pakistani politicians.

5.4 Participants' Constructions of Political Leadership in Pakistan

In this section, I discuss the participants' constructions of political leaders and rulers of Pakistan. Issues related to the lack of effective and honest leadership were discussed in the last three focus groups.

The participants argued that the political leaders, especially those who managed to get into power were dishonest and corrupt. Natasha (F, FG6) said: 'They steal from Pakistan – they, they steal from us – they steal from us! If they steal from Pakistan, they steal from us.' Aamer (M, FG5) talking about rampant corruption said that 'A weak political leadership is to blame for this. They don't have the guts, you know, to stand up. And they don't have the character to stand up.'

Adil (M, FG4) said that politics in Pakistan was a dirty man's business. He mentioned that in national elections most of the candidates had a nefarious and questionable track record. He claimed that they would have been involved in all sorts of illegal activities like dealing in drugs and would also have spent time in the jail. He said, 'I think, that's the problem, if the National Assembly is full of criminals, then how the hell you suppose that you're going to run a country in very smooth manner.' This perception that most politicians had a dubious, even a criminal past, was quite common amongst the middle class Pakistanis and augmented the military's ambitions to 'sort out the mess' that the corrupt and inefficient politicians created in the country.

The discourse of corruption of politicians has been strong in Pakistan. Khan (2007: 230), analyzing the widespread corruption in all aspects of Pakistan's national life, writes:

By the 1990s, corruption was no longer sporadic, isolated or petty; it was systemic: corruption was the norm and honest behaviour by politicians or civil servants was rapidly becoming the exception.

When the fieldwork for this research was carried out the discourse of corruption of civilian politicians was in wide circulation. In Pakistan, often unlawful military interventions have been seen by the people as a relief from the corrupt and dishonest rule of civilian politicians (Schofield, 2009). When I began my fieldwork, General Pervez Musharraf was the president who had wrested power from the civilian Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Analysing the effects of successive military interventions on the Pakistani state, Farooq (2012) writes:

All the military regimes were welcomed with the hope that they would improve the deteriorating security environment by resolving socio-economic problems facing the country, including corruption, maladministration and misuse of power.

When the last three focus groups were carried out, democracy had been restored and the government of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Asif Ali Zardari had been installed. As a result of the rising militancy and other myriad problems faced by the country at the time of the fieldwork, the discourse of corruption of the politicians was quite common. Saira (F, FG5) argued that the politicians were no good and frivolous:

The politicians are just messed up – that's the whole problem! Our politicians are messed up – how can we blame the world for that? If you have a person like Yousuf Raza Gillani [then prime minister of Pakistan] who goes on to say that my favourite actress is Aiswariya – he used to watch her films in the jail – what more do you want? He is that kind of a – what kind of a person is he?

Saira argued that the country's politicians lacked personal and professional mettle and stature. She cited the example of the then newly elected Prime Minister, Yousuf Raza Gillani, who, according to her, professed being a fan of a glamorous Indian film actress. The discourse of Pakistani civilian politicians lacking maturity and professional acumen is commonplace. It has been argued that Pakistani politicians lack maturity because the political institutions and processes could not take root in the country due to frequent military interventions (Haqqani, 2006; Schofield, 2009; Farooq, 2012; Rabbani, 2013).

Adil (M, FG4) argued that the country did not get appropriate leadership after Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who spearheaded the movement for a separate homeland for the Muslims of British India:

I think the lack of leadership after Quaid-e-Azam [Jinnah] has been the factor. There has never been anyone who could unite the, you know, four provinces together.

When Pakistan came into being in 1947, Jinnah was already an ailing man. Unlike the Indian National Congress, the All India Muslim League proved ill-prepared to bequeath to the nascent state of Pakistan much-needed political traditions and institutions. Except for Jinnah, very few leaders in the Muslim League were committed to democracy. Therefore, when Jinnah passed away in 1948, the country was left without any well-developed, substantial democratic institutions (Haqqani, 2006). Due to lack of able and mature leadership, the country's military started meddling in the affairs of statecraft.

Huma (F, FG6) said that the one of the main reasons for the problems confronting the country was 'having bad leaders'. Aamer (M, FG5) argued that the precarious situation faced by Pakistan at the time when the research was carried out was because of weak leaders: 'A weak political leadership is to blame for this. They don't have the guts, you know, to stand up. And they don't have the character to stand up.'

In the final focus group, the participants argued that the leaders had sold the country to the US:

Natasha (F): Because our leaders – our leaders they sold our country to them.

Naveed: How?

Natasha (F): Because, look, umm, we are listening to everything they say. We follow – like, when Musharraf –

Aan (F): Why Musharraf, when, like the treaty...

Huma (F): It really started with the Afghanistan war, when Musharraf refused to help Afghanistan and allowed the American troops in.

Aan (F): He sold Pakistan for something!

Huma (F): That doesn't mean that you should sell yourself to someone just because they're giving something to us.

Aan (F): Why did Musharraf give the base? Why – because he took something from the Americans.

Huma (F): See that's the point, when Musharraf gave the base he also lost all the friends that Pakistan had.

(Focus Group 6)

The discourse of Pakistan Government acquiescing to US diktat was a common one at the time when I collected data for this research. General Musharraf's support to the US led 'war on terror' was seen by people as surrender to the US diktat:

Musharraf government [sic] provided all support by fulfilling all demands of Washington unconditionally by providing logistic and military support even by ignoring the large anti-American demonstration across the country. Musharraf who was known to be a dubious dictator became strongest strategic ally of the US in the war on terror.

(Akbar, 2011: 156)

The cost of Pakistan's involvement in the US led 'war on terror' has been incalculable. The country has suffered tremendously in terms of economic growth and development, internal law and order, national cohesion, the image and morale of the armed forces, and its foreign relations with other countries (Akbar, 2011). Many Pakistanis were not happy with the decision of the government of General Pervez Musharraf to join the 'war on terror'. They maintained that it constituted an abject surrender by the ruling elite to the diktats of the US government which was pursuing an anti-Islam and anti-Pakistan agenda (Chomsky, 2007).

Saeed, (M, FG4) argued that to resolve the issues faced by Pakistan, it needed a 'true leader':

I think, what we truly need is a true leader – the right leader, who can really guide us. Like, we don't need Zardari [the husband of Benazir Bhutto, who became the co-chairman of the Pakistan People's Party after her assassination]. I heard the news that he's going to be the next Prime Minister of Pakistan. We need a programme. We need a true...a true leader like Imam Khomeini [the Iranian spiritual leader who spearheaded the Iranian revolution in the 1970s] who brought the revolution in Iran, we need the same thing in Pakistan.

Saeed said that they needed a 'true leader' who could 'guide' them and take them out of the then prevailing difficulties. He also stated that they did not need leaders like Asif Ali Zardari. The PPP won the general elections in 2008 and at the time of this focus group there was a strong speculation that he will either become the president or the prime minister of the country. This speculation turned out to be well-founded when Zardari was democratically elected as the 11th President of Pakistan in September 2008. Saeed rejected Zardari, even before he was elected president and said that they needed a 'true' leader like Imam Khomeini. He advocated an Iran-style revolution in Pakistan. This rejection of the existing political leaders is commonplace among the middle class Pakistanis. From my own experience of living in Pakistan and discussing the issues confronting the country, I know that the discourse of upright and selfless Iranian revolutionary leadership was used frequently. However, most middle class Pakistanis when use this discourse, do not usually advocate a theocratic state; the main focus is on the austerity and integrity of the political leadership.

In focus group 5, two participants mentioned the then Iranian President Ahmedinejad to present a contrast with Pakistani politicians:

Saira (F): Listen Ahmedinejad still comes on his own car; he drives himself, then he goes back home for his lunch, and then he comes back.

Babur (M): Well, there is a hell of a lot of difference between Ahmedinejad and our President.

Saira (F): Well, there's no difference – Ahmedinejad is as big a President—

Saira cited the example of the Iranian President to contrast and highlight the lavish and corrupt lifestyles of Pakistani leaders. She also referred to the Indian leaders' simple lifestyle, which is discussed in greater detail in section 6.1.1. The discourse of Indian leaders' austerity is again a common one amongst middle class Pakistanis and the media. It is quite likely that these young people would have heard such ideas discussed in their homes and extended social worlds.

By the time I conducted the final focus group, Asif Ali Zardari had been elected as the President of Pakistan in September 2008. In focus group 6, two participants, while discussing the issue of corruption in the country said:

Natasha (F): There's an example, right, that our leader – our President – he has for some reason – for whatever reason – he has been in jail for eleven years okay? And we elect that person who we know that is corrupt – we know he's corrupt – we have proof that he's been in jail for eleven years – he said himself that I've been in jail for eleven years – how then we—

Mysha (F): How do we elect our President a person, who is a criminal, you know?

Natasha (F): He's a corrupt person – we all know that – anybody knows that and still we elect him.

Asif Ali Zardari has a reputation tainted by numerous corruption scandals and cases. There was widespread consternation and disbelief amongst middle class Pakistanis about the fact that he was elected to the highest office of the land. Reporting his election as president, Perlez (2008) wrote:

It is a startling comeback for a man who, though never convicted here, spent 11 years in jail here on corruption and murder charges as one of Pakistan's most ostracized figures.

Saira (F, FG5) also criticised Zardari and said that if they had leaders like him then surely the country was 'confused'.

The participants maintained that there were very few options available in terms of political leaders. Therefore, people were forced to vote for the same people over and over again. Nawira (F, FG5) said:

We have very little options and we do not know who to vote for. I mean, everybody is confused, because everybody is involved in corruption – all our politicians are involved.

The discourse of limited political leadership is a common one in Pakistan. There have been two major political parties in Pakistan for the past 40 years – the Pakistan Muslim League and the Pakistan People's Party. From my own experience of living in the country, I know that there is a sense of general cynicism amongst the middle class who argue that members of a select group of families hold offices in the major political parties and, hence, remain in power no matter who forms the government. Commenting on the domination of politics by the elite, Rabbani (2013: 5) writes:

...in this case the elites seemingly prevent and/or disrupt meaningful sharing of the political pie with the majority commoners, which has acquired frightening proportions, causing immense socio-political instability and potentially can dissolve the nation itself, if not arrested immediately.

To summarise, the participants argued that the political leaders of Pakistan were corrupt and dishonest and lacked personal and professional mettle. They posited that after Jinnah, the country did not get appropriate leadership. Some of them asserted that the leaders had sold the country to foreign powers. They argued that in order to sort out the problems confronting the country upright and honest leaders were needed. They argued that there were limited options available for choosing political leaders who could form an effective government.

5.5 Pakistan Army

In this section, I discuss the participants' constructions of the Pakistan Army. It is important to mention that the data analysed in this section is from only one focus group. However, the specific circumstances surrounding this session, including its timing make it significant enough for meriting a separate section. The data discussed here is from the fifth focus group that was conducted in a school located just outside the cantonment limits of Rawalpindi, very close to the headquarters of the Pakistan Army. A high proportion of the students in this focus group either had a parent in the armed forces or had some other connection with this powerful national institution. Most participants in this focus group made an unsolicited conscious effort to support Pakistan Army. The fourth focus group was also conducted in a school in the same area. However, participants in that session did not explicitly support the army. The most probable reason for this was that when this focus group was conducted the military government of General Pervez Musharraf was still in power. However, by the time the fifth focus group was conducted a civilian government had been elected and General Musharraf had been forced to resign under the threat of imminent impeachment by the national parliament.

This discussion about the Pakistan army, even though based on only one focus group, was significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, the military has traditionally played a highly significant role in both the internal and external affairs of the country. Therefore, any notable references to it merited appropriate exploration and analysis. Secondly, as mentioned above, the geographical and chronological location of this focus group was important in the context of this discussion. Chronologically, the session took place soon after the ousting of the government of the military dictator, General Pervez Musharraf. This was a time when the popular support for the army was at its lowest point ever. The arguments made by all participants except one in this group could be understood better in the context of that political environment. Finally, this discussion about the Pakistan Army was not the result of any direct questions, which highlights the preoccupation of the young people, who participated in this focus group, with this subject.

Support for the army in conjunction with a rejection of the civilian politicians appeared as a recurrent theme in this focus group. The following extract highlights this point.

Aamer (M, FG 5): ...you know, when there was the government of PPP in the nineties and also in the – after the death of Zia-ul-Haq – 1988 onwards. In 1998 Pakistan was one of the most corrupt nations – countries in the world, according to every sort of organization that conducted the research.

Saira (F, FG 5): And, you know, now the army doesn't come in the number – the top five, even. It doesn't even come in the top hundred most corrupt organizations in Pakistan. And it is supposed to be on top.

Naveed: It doesn't?

Saira (F, FG 5): It doesn't. It doesn't come even in the top hundred.

After 11 years of General Zia-ul-Haq's martial law, the civilian governments of Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif alternated in office each twice from 1988 to 1998. According to Aamer, by the end of this decade of civilian governments, Pakistan had become one of the most corrupt countries in the world. He posited that this descent started in 1988 and resulted in Pakistan being ranked as a highly corrupt country in 1998. The two dates that he mentioned are noteworthy because the earlier one marked the end of the military government of General Zia-ul-Haq and the latter the end of the decade of civilian rule in the country when General Pervaiz Musharraf once again imposed martial law by deposing the democratically elected government of the Pakistan Muslim League led by Nawaz Sharif. What he seemed to be implying was that the descent into corruption began with the beginning of civilian rule in 1988 and culminated in Pakistan being ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world in 1998 – the year before another martial law was imposed in the country.

Hussain (2009) has argued that Pakistan's performance on the economic and social fronts was one of the worst during the 1990s. He cites 'widespread misgovernance by the two major political parties ruling the country during this period' as one of the key reasons for the country's exceptionally weak economic and social indicators during this period. All four civilian governments were dismissed from office either by the President or through the imposition martial law, citing political corruption as one of the key reasons for it. Thus, the discourse of political corruption was a strong one

during the first decade of the 21st century. Political corruption was frequently discussed in social gatherings and the media. It is very likely that the young people who participated in my research encountered this discourse.

In the above quoted excerpt, Saira quickly tried to vindicate the military by stating that the Pakistan Army did not figure even in the top one hundred most corrupt organizations in the country. She tacitly supported Aamer's views on rampant corruption in the country but quickly qualified it by absolving the military of involvement in any corrupt practices. She also lamented the fact that the Pakistan Army was generally perceived to be corrupt.

The extensive penetration of the military in the political and economic systems in the developing countries, especially in Pakistan, has been comprehensively exposed by Ayesha Siddiqa (2007). Siddiqa (2007) maintains that whereas the penetration of the military in the political and economic systems of Pakistan has been extensive, there has also been a concerted effort on part of the military establishment to conceal this involvement in order to portray itself as much more 'clean', and 'honest' compared to its civilian counterparts and hence present itself as irreproachable and immune from criticism and scrutiny.

In the same focus group, Babur (M, FG5) reiterated Aamer and Saira's views about the integrity of the Pakistan Army.

Well, I don't think there is much corruption in the army and the judiciary. The main corruption lies with our civil departments like FBR – the Federal Board of Revenue – the biggest corruption department. And then Customs, and then this clerk office and all that.

To drive home the point, Babur compared the army with a few civilian departments that have a strong reputation for corruption in the country. He tried to deflect any potential charge against the army by highlighting the corruption in various civilian departments. Invariably the army's successive seizures of the government came 'with the support of the citizenry, who are often relieved that whatever kleptocratic government preceded it has been ousted' (Fair, 2011: 576). Notwithstanding the discourse of army as the internal saviour of the country, the discourse of its institutional corruption and entrenched vested interests in all aspects of national life was becoming increasingly audible in the public domain. One of the most notable

sources of this discourse was Siddiq's (2007) book titled *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*.

Supporting the army, Aamer (M, FG5) said:

The problem with the army is the image problem. People say that a General was moving around and he was using an A series (BMW). This happens all around the world. Why are we, you know, so sensitive about it?

In the above excerpt, Aamer was referring to the widespread criticisms of the Pakistan Army towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century when this focus group was conducted. People were getting fed up of General Pervez Musharraf's illegitimate, military rule. His unconditional support to the American 'war on terror' had won him many critics, especially in the more conservative, North-Western tribal belt of the country. By the time this focus group was conducted, many middle class Pakistanis also saw Musharraf as part of the troubles confronting their country. As mentioned above, the publication of Siddiq's book brought the economic and financial stakes of the army in many fields of national life to public consciousness. Commenting on these, Siddiq (2007: 139) writes:

During the years under study, the senior generals acquired the political power that allowed them to engage in predatory financial acquisition. The economic power, in turn, is what deepened their appetite for political power. The growth of Milbus¹ during the period under study marks the GHQ's efforts to re-establish the military's financial autonomy, and also shows how senior generals used their greater power to manipulate resources for their personal advantage.

This book by Siddiq (2007) provided one of the most systematic and well-argued critiques of the entrenchment of the military in all aspects of national life. It exposed the financial and economic enterprises of the army and how these were used to benefit its personnel, especially the senior officers. The participants in the same focus group further defended the army:

Nawira (F): Comparatively, there is less corruption in army – you just can't deny that.

¹ Milbus (denoting military-business) is a term used by Ayesha Siddiq in her book *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, to denote the massive economic and financial interests of the military in the national economy.

Saira (F): At the same time there are groups of people – there are types of people in every organization for that matter. I have seen...I know these two generals – one of the generals would be misusing his opportunities, you know, and his car – his son is driving his official car – it's not allowed. And things like that go on. And there is one person completely honest about it...

Nawira (F): But you can't spoil the image of an organization for one person.

Aamer (M): It is blown out of proportion. Actually if you take hundred army people or these officers – khakis [term for army personnel] – only ten of them would be corrupt.

Babur (M): Very less.

Aamer (M): But they would come out in the front and those 90% who are doing their job would sit back and no one would look at them.

(FG5)

All the four participants in the above excerpt were trying to support the military and absolve it of any significant corruption. These views can be better understood by looking at the political circumstances prevailing in the country at the time when this focus group was conducted. This focus group was conducted in September 2008. It had been only six months since the installation of the first civilian government after nine years of military government of General Pervez Musharraf. Benazir Bhutto was assassinated less than a year ago, the law and order situation was the worst ever, since the creation of the country, and the support for the army was at its lowest ebb. The emergence of the discourse of army's institutional corruption and entrenched vested interests in all aspects of national life, mentioned earlier, coupled with the unpopularity of the military government of General Musharraf, a counter-discourse began to emerge that presented army personnel as relatively 'clean' and 'honest' compared to civilian politicians. Army officers and people sympathetic to the institution often drew on this discourse of army as a relatively honest organisation that often played the role of the saviour of the country, saving it from the malpractices and excesses of civilian politicians. It is likely that the young people who participated in this focus group came across this discourse in their homes.

There was, however, one exception to the general tendency observed in this focus group. One of the participants, Tabish (M, FG 5) did not offer any direct support for the

military. In response to Aamer's comment, in above-quoted excerpt, about the corruption in the army getting 'blown out of proportion' he said:

I think, the problem with army is that they are trained in a way that they are instructed to dominate. They think that they are the ones running the system.

Tabish here was expressing the views shared by many middle class Pakistani civilians, who argued that the army officers' training included a strong discourse that presented them as the saviours of the country, not just from external threats but also from internal problems and dangers – in most cases, posed by the inept and corrupt politicians. This discourse legitimised the domination of the country's political system by the army. Aamer (M, FG5) immediately responded to this assertion by Tabish and said:

The army is not to blame for this. A weak political leadership is to blame for this. They don't have the guts, you know, to stand up. And they don't have the character to stand up. On what basis can Zardari say that this general is corrupt, and this general is corrupt, when he himself is the biggest, you know, absconder?

Given the focus of what Tabish was saying, Aamer's response seems somewhat out of context. Whereas Tabish was referring to the training of the army officers where they were presented with the discourse of army as the saviour of the country, Aamer replied by the referring to the lack of character and courage of the civilian politicians. He asserted that the politicians had no right to call the generals corrupt. This response of Aamer also makes sense in the context of widespread disenchantment with the military and its role in the internal affairs of the country and can be seen as drawing on a counter-discourse.

A little later in the same focus group, Babur (M, FG5) made an argument about the importance of the army for Pakistan:

Well, the problem with Pakistan is that army is a, you know, an essential thing. We can't have – we can't just say that downsize the army, make it small and put the budget on things like health and schooling. You know, we have security issues – we are surrounded by adversaries on all sides on all sides of the border, except for China and Iran.

Over here Babur was arguing that army was an essential institution for Pakistan. He claimed that the country could not afford to cut down the army and divert the freed up resources to public services like health and education. The discourse of cutting down the military expenditure has been common in the Pakistani civil society. Advocating this course of action Shah (2011: no page number) writes:

It is worth noting that Pakistan's economic difficulties are the result not just of bad luck and poor management, and therefore they cannot be fixed with development aid alone. They are rooted in fundamental structural problems as well: military expenditures dwarf spending on development. Pakistan has one of the world's largest out-of-school populations, yet it spends seven times as much on the military every year as on education, an investment with a higher national security payoff in the long run. Thus, the country must find a way to rationalize its military expenditures.

Deteriorating law and order situation, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, and the unpopular decision of the General Musharraf to sack the Chief Justice of Pakistan were all factors that were fairly recent and fresh at the time when this focus group was conducted. The army's role in national politics was widely condemned and there were frequent discussions about cutting down expenditure on the armed forces. Babur's assertions about the importance of the army for the country can be understood against this background. Babur (M, FG5) further on also claimed that the money allocated to the Pakistan army was spent efficiently:

...the money allotted to army has been, you know, spent efficiently. You know, when a person is assigned a task, he does it. If money has been given to education department for building a school, they wouldn't just buy air-conditioners for their office. So, mismanagement and corruption is the main issue in civil departments...

Further to his argument about the need for maintaining the army, Babur in the above excerpt said that Pakistan army used the money allocated to it efficiently. As discussed earlier, Siddiq's (2007) book on Pakistan army was an influential academic critique of its dominant role in the economic and entrepreneurial spheres of the country.

The discourse of army's efficiency is often used by the military leadership and sources supportive of the military to legitimise its pervasive control of various key domains of

national life. Building on Babur's argument about the army being more efficient and honest, Saira (F, FG5) said:

And why are we having wheat crisis this time? The President, so called, said that we had a bumper crop this time! When he said that we had a bumper crop, we exported all the wheat out. Now we are importing it back in on double the price. And he is making money out of it. Of course I am not saying that every person is not a patriot – every army person is not a patriot. We have people like sepoy [the Urdu term for a soldier] Maqbool Hussain who was a diehard patriot until – he has still been awarded with an award or something...of an award – Sitara-e-Jurat [a military award for gallantry].

Here Saira was referring to a specific incident that happened in Pakistan. In 2007 Pakistan had a bumper crop of wheat. This was a time when global prices of wheat were spiralling upwards and the cost of wheat in two of Pakistan's immediate neighbours – Iran and Afghanistan – were significantly higher than they were in Pakistan. Motivated by a desire to reduce the deficit in the balance of payment the then government of Pakistan exported a substantial part of the country's wheat stock. This led to a severe shortage of wheat in the subsequent year when the crop wasn't as good as in the previous year (Kardar, 2008). However, this fiasco actually occurred at a time when General Musharraf was in power. What the newly elected government had to do was to control the damage by importing wheat at a much higher price. Asif Ali Zardari was the President of the country at the time when this focus group was conducted. Drawing on the discourse of corrupt civilian politicians, Saira referred to him as the 'so called' president who, according to her, was making money out of it. She did qualify this by adding that she was not claiming that every person (civilian) was unpatriotic. She then went on to say that neither every army officer was a 'patriot'. However, the example of an army person that she brought up was that of a Pakistan Army's wartime hero – Sepoy Maqbool Hussein. Hussein was taken prisoner of war in the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war and remained in Indian jails for forty years. He suffered inhumane treatment and extreme forms cruelty and torture in Indian jails. He became a national hero and was awarded the Sitara-e-Jurat (Star of Courage) – the third highest military award in the country – by the Pakistan Army for his gallantry and courage. The selection of Maqbool's example was a skilful manoeuvre by Saira, drawing on the discourse of army personnel sacrificing their lives for the country. She

stated that not every army person was a 'patriot' yet the example that she cited was a person who had become an icon of sacrifice and pathos in the national consciousness. I know from my experiencing of living in the country that the general resentment expressed by a vast majority of people in the country was rarely, if ever, directed against the ordinary soldiers who endangered their lives for the country. The main thrust of that resentment was against the senior officers who were then increasingly seen as involved in reaping economic benefits and as being responsible for the deteriorating political, economic and security situation in the country at that time.

Like earlier on in the focus group, Tabish presented a position that was challenged and resisted by others:

Tabish (M): If anyone speaks up he is no more! So, you shouldn't expect me to speak up in front of ISI. I saw this person, umm, he lives near my place. He was once sitting...standing outside the mosque he disappeared. And, he was, umm, talking crap about Mr. Musharraf. And all of a sudden that person was lost and he was nowhere to be found – it's near my place. Someone told me that he was taken by ISI but I don't know where he went.

Aamer (M): We always blame the ISI. We don't realize the fact...

Babur (M): ISI has been working for Pakistan – all the time!

Aamer (M): Why would ISI be bothered that someone is insulting Musharraf? You know, they are, they're not bothered by this fact. They just want to do their job of defending this country internally and externally. And the main job of an intelligence agency is to destabilize the adversaries and to keep a check on the internal matters of the country. And we just blame ISI all the time – I mean, why would they bother to do all this?

In the above extract, ISI is an acronym for Inter-Services Intelligence. ISI, as the name suggests, is the intelligence organisation of Pakistan Armed Forces. ISI gained increased salience in national affairs since the 1980s when it was used by the US and the then military President of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq to fight against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (Siddiq, 2007). Tabish in the above extract alluded to the not so favourable view of the ISI, held by some people, regarding its role in 'silencing' the opponents and critics of the military establishment. However, Babur and Aamer both offered a robust defence of the ISI. ISI's controversial role in the internal affairs of

the country is well-documented. Providing a scathing critique of the ISI during the ten year civilian rule from 1988 to 1998, Sidiqqa (2007: 95) posited:

The military's intelligence apparatus played a key role in encouraging the divisions between the political actors. The intelligence agencies gained strength through their enhanced role in regional and global geopolitics, and through greater involvement at home. Political horse-trading was rife during these ten years, as part of the manipulative mechanisms used by the ISI and other intelligence outfits, and resulted in an increase in political and economic corruption.

To summarise, four out of five participants in this focus group explicitly supported and defended the Pakistan Army. They argued that the civilian politicians and the governments they formed were responsible for corruption in the country. They said that the army was largely not a corrupt institution. Any corruption that existed was blown out of proportion by the media, which, some of them maintained, were biased in favour of civilian politicians. They also argued that army ran various national institutions more efficiently and honestly. They argued that given the geopolitical situation the army should not be downsized. Notwithstanding the overwhelming support for this important national institution, one participant tried to criticise some aspects of the army and its intelligence wing – the ISI. However, other participants robustly responded to what he said and defended the army.

5.6 Discussion

In this chapter, I have analysed the participants' constructions of some aspects their own country – Pakistan. They argued that there was widespread poverty in the country and it was sharply divided along lines of income and economic prosperity. They posited that the wide gap between the rich and poor showed no sign of decreasing and was one of the important reasons for the country's slide into militancy and religious extremism. They also acknowledged their own privileged position within Pakistani society.

The participants made indirect references to the Islamic basis of the Pakistani state, drawing on the two nation theory. Most participants used Islam as a perspective to talk about the world. Except for a couple of participants in one focus group, most

participants did not draw on the discourse of Islam to construct their personal identities.

The participants were critical of the state of democracy in the country. They argued that the democratic system was dysfunctional because a powerful elite group manipulated it to perpetuate their hold on power. The participants criticised the political leadership of Pakistan, arguing that they lacked personal and professional integrity and mettle. They maintained that the problems confronting the country could only be solved if there were honest, upright and committed political leaders.

In one focus group, the participants tried to support and defend the Pakistan Army without being solicited to do so. They argued that the widespread corruption in the country was due to civilian politicians. They said that the allegations of the army's corruptions were exaggerated and out of proportion. They also opposed any suggestion to downsize the army.

On the whole, discussions pertaining to Pakistan gained greater salience in the later focus groups. The reasons for this were twofold. Firstly, as mentioned above, specific questions pertaining to Pakistan were asked in the last three focus groups. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the increased focus on Pakistan during the later sessions also reflected the changing geopolitical situation in Pakistan and the region. There had been a sharp rise in terrorist violence in the country because of the Pakistan government's support for the US-led 'war on terror'. The violent repercussions of this policy of the Pakistan government were being felt by all Pakistanis in very real and immediate ways.

Benazir Bhutto's assassination was arguably an event of momentous proportions and a watershed moment in the way issues like terrorism and the domestic and international politics were perceived by ordinary Pakistanis. The assassination of the twice elected, former Prime Minister of Pakistan and the country's modern and liberal face for the international community brought home the brutal reality of terrorism for all citizens of the country and they realised that far from being a distant issue, terrorism and associated violence was a menace lurking in the very streets where they lived, worked, and spent their leisure time. Komal, one of the girls, in the focus group conducted in school 4 in February 2008 said:

Komal (F, FG 4): Looks like there is nothing safe in the world – not even your own home, not even your own town – is Rawalpindi safe after Benazir’s assassination? No it is not! Is Pakistan safe? No it is not! Is any country in the world safe now? No it is not!

Terrorism had come to the very heart of the country – the cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi – where the fieldwork for this study was carried out. Before this, for the residents of these two cities, terrorist violence was somewhat removed and distant. They read about and saw images of terrorist violence in other parts of the country, mostly in the North West Frontier Province, especially in the areas close to the border with Afghanistan. Further to what Komal said above, two other participants further extended her apprehension:

Zoya (F, FG4): Rawalpindi was the sleeping town – the *sleeping* town – now we have bomb blasts.

Adil (M, FG4): I think, we as Pakistanis feel it the worst. I don’t know, the rest of the world is treating us fine, but as we are going through such trauma, recently, I think our views would be very much different.

When the fieldwork for this research was carried out Pakistan was going through a tumultuous and rapidly changing period. The implications of the Pakistan government to participate in the US led ‘war on terror’ were being felt by all Pakistanis and this was reflected in the discussions that took place in the last three focus groups.

Having discussed the participants’ constructions of Pakistan, in the next chapter I analyse their perspective on the wider world.

6 The Participants' Constructions of the Wider World

This chapter builds on the previous one in which the participants' constructions of Pakistan were discussed. Here, I discuss their perspectives on the wider world. I analyse how they conceptualised the wider world along certain geopolitical and ideological lines. Like the previous one, this chapter sets the scene for the subsequent chapters that focus on international conflicts. It does so by providing an insight into how the research participants constructed the world beyond Pakistan. They talked about various historical events that contributed to the then prevailing configuration and dynamics of the international space. Their constructions of the international space were varied, complex, and subtle. It is pertinent to mention that most of the data discussed in this chapter did not come up as a result of specific, directed questions; most of it was mentioned by the participants while discussing other issues. Therefore, in many cases only a few and in some cases only a couple of individuals said something about the topics analysed in this chapter. However, since specific questions were not asked by me, it cannot be assumed that other participants would not have said similar things if asked about these issues.

I begin by discussing the participants' reference to individual countries. This is followed by a detailed analysis of their constructions of three countries – India, England and the US. Next, I discuss their references to various blocs of countries like the EU and the Islamic world. Subsequently, I analyse their references to various supranational organisations like the United Nations (UN) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Finally, I analyse their discussion about certain socio-economic perspectives like Marxism, socialism and capitalism.

6.1 Countries

In this section, I discuss the participants' references to individual countries. Doing this helps in providing an insight into their constructions of the wider world, based on the references they made to different countries and significance they attached to each of these. There was a high level of variation in the frequency, detail and depth of references made to these countries. Of some, only names were mentioned, whereas in the case of others detailed discussion took place. References to many countries were made not in response to specific questions. There was also great variation in the

number of participants who mentioned various countries listed in this section. For example, references to the US were made by nearly all participants but places like Cuba, Equatorial Guinea and Macau were mentioned by only one participant in each case.

The following is the list of countries that the participants made references to:

Asia

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- China
- India
- Iran
- Japan
- Kazakhstan
- Macau
- North Korea
- Pakistan
- Russia
- South Korea
- Uzbekistan

Asia Pacific

- Australia

Middle East

- Iraq
- Israel
- Lebanon
- Palestine
- Saudi Arabia
- Syria
- United Arab Emirates

Europe

- Britain
- France
- Germany
- Scandinavia
- Spain

Africa

- Egypt
- Equatorial Guinea
- Libya

North America

- Cuba
- The United States of America

Figure 6.1 shows a world map with countries mentioned by the participants highlighted in red.



Figure 6.1 – World map with countries referred to by the participants highlighted in red

Iran was mentioned mostly in reference to its leadership which the participants constructed as independent and not pliant to the Western, especially the US, diktat. Reference to Syria was made in the context of it receiving military support from Iran.

References to Israel were made mainly against the backdrop of Middle Eastern international politics. It was constructed as an aggressor state that was backed by the US. Saudi Arabia was mentioned mainly by one specific participant, Mysha (F, FG6) who had lived there for seventeen years. She said 'Saudi Arabia is actually a very good resource – natural reserve for oil.' She argued that since it was an oil rich country the US had a special interest in it. Babur (M, FG5) posited that, along with the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia was economically dependent on the US.

Cuba was mentioned by Aan (F, FG6) as a small country which had a very high literacy rate. Adil (M, FG4) referred to North Korea, Libya and Iran in the context of the role of Pakistan's nuclear scientist Dr. A. Q. Khan, who had allegedly facilitated these countries in acquiring nuclear technology:

A. Q. Khan...gave the nuclear technology to Libya, North Korea and Iran. I think, umm, Iran and Libya are, probably, justified because they are Muslim countries – Muslim brothers. But North Korea was, it was purely – I think it was a very bad thing. And even for a person who is nationalist and patriotic like me, that is not on – it shouldn't have been done!

Adil argued that Dr. Khan was justified in facilitating Libya and Iran in acquiring nuclear technology but not North Korea because the former two were Muslim countries and the latter wasn't. Adil's argument drew on the discourse of Muslim countries united through a supranational religious ideology (Crockatt, 2004).

As can be seen from the list of countries and figure 6.1, the participants mentioned countries mostly located in Asia and the Middle East. No countries in Central and South America, except Cuba, were mentioned by them. In Africa only three countries – Egypt, Libya and Equatorial Guinea – were mentioned. The former two are Muslim countries and the latter a Christian one. Most of the countries mentioned by the participants were geographically close to Pakistan. The countries that were discussed at some length by the participants included Afghanistan, Britain, India, Iraq, and the US. In the following sections, I analyse participants' constructions of three countries: India, Britain and the US. I do not discuss Afghanistan and Iraq in this chapter because these were mentioned almost exclusively in the context of post September 11 international conflicts, which comprise the focus of chapters 8 and 9.

6.1.1 India

In this section, I discuss the participants' constructions of India. I chose to begin with India because frequent references were made to it in all focus groups. The contexts of these references were varied. In this section, I only discuss participants' constructions of India as a country and its impact on the Pakistanis' national identity. References to it in the context of its conflicts with Pakistan will be analysed in the next chapter. Importantly, the participants used India as a reference point to look at the position of their own country – Pakistan – in the international space. In all focus groups numerous references were made to India – the eastern neighbour of Pakistan. India figures as an important country in the imagination of most Pakistanis. This is partly due to the fact that the two of them were one country till about six decades ago. Since the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the two countries have seen each other as adversaries and have fought three wars. Suedfield and Jhangiani (2009: 939) have referred to the Pakistan-India relationship as a case of 'enduring rivalry'. Most participants of my research saw India as an adversary. For example, Fahad (M, FG2), said 'India and Pakistan are classic examples' of two parties not being able to see things from each other's point of view. Similarly, Malihah (F, FG2) said that Pakistan and India 'are in a constant conflict since 1947'.

Not all references to India were in the context of it being an adversary, enemy state. In focus group one, Maher and Salma made references to India in relation to its system of democracy. Maher argued that democracy in India was different from that in Pakistan:

Maher (M, FG1): ... I just said you're talking about Pakistani democracy, where voters can be fed, where you can put in money and win elections. But this does not actually happen in other parts of the world... Give me an example an example from India.

In the above extract, the reference to India was made in the context of a broader discussion regarding the relationship between social inequality and democracy. Maher (M, FG1) said that in India 'BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] which was – which had perfect reasons to win, it had brought about an economic revival in India, it was ousted.' In response to this, Salma (F, FG1) said that the reason that the BJP lost was that 'the social development factor was extremely low in all of the region. BJP [was not able to improve India's] social HDI – the human development index –' Both these participants

talked about Indian politics and issues related to social development. Maher was arguing that the Indian democracy was sound and people did not cast their votes merely for short-term economic gains. According to him, the BJP brought about an economic revival in the country but was still ousted from the government. Salma argued that the economic successes of Bhartiya Janata Party did not translate into social development which, according to her, became one of the reasons for its defeat in 2004. They talked about not only the outcomes of the general elections in India but they were also analysed some other relevant substantive political and social issues in that country. Adil (M, FG4) said that India had many more provinces compared to Pakistan:

I think it's very nice excuse to say we're divided along lines, along lines of culture, lines along provinces, we have four different – their reputation says that Pakistan is basically four bulls tied with their tails together. I think there are worse cases. India has like so many provinces... I think it's no longer an excuse that democracy doesn't work in Pakistan and we are divided along sectarian lines. I think, basically, what's hampering the growth is basically us!

Some of the participants argued that Indian leaders maintained a much more down-to-earth and modest profile compared to the leaders in their own country:

Saira (F, FG5): It doesn't happen all around the world. You still see the Indian President going around in a Hindustan 10 – that's the smallest car, that's an Indian made car.

Saira made this remark in the context of discussion about the relatively ostentatious and indulgent lifestyles of the Pakistani political leaders. Some of the participants also referred to the fact the wider world, especially the West, had different attitudes towards India and Pakistan. In focus group 6, the following discussion took place:

Natasha (F): There's so much racism just because I am a Pakistani. Why so much racism? Not with Indians – nobody says anything to Indians – never! It's always because you are a Paki! Everybody – if you are brown, that's it you're a Paki!

Mysha (F): Not even Paki – even if you're an Asian...

Aan (F): All Asiatic countries – just Pakistan or other places as well?

Mysha (F): India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China

Natasha (F): If an Indian is corrupt, right? They won't look at their background – they won't be like he's an *Indian*. They just be like you're a Paki.

Mysha (F): Exactly.

Natasha (F) They won't *ever, ever* blame anyone – Indians or Gujratis – they would always blame Pakistanis.

This discussion drew on quite a common discourse in Pakistan about the different attitudes of the West towards Pakistan and India. Natasha, quoted in the above extract, was a British national who had moved back to Pakistan sometime back. This discourse became more prevalent in Pakistan in the years after the September 11 attacks, especially in the wake of the American establishment's increasingly ambivalent and distrustful relationship with Pakistan. Tabish (M, FG5) said:

And now when it comes to India which is a non-Muslim state, they're ready to accept it as a nuclear power. And they're ready to make agreements with it, make nuclear reactors and products related to that, so that they can improve upon their technology, and not – ignoring Pakistan!!

I know from my personal experience that the American sanctions against Pakistan due the latter's nuclear explosions in the 1998 were viewed unfavourably by the majority of Pakistanis and the national media. This resentment was fuelled by the fact that Pakistan detonated its nuclear devices only in response to India's doing so for the second time in 1998. Many Pakistanis felt that the West, especially the US, unfairly targeted Pakistan by levying various sanctions against it. Mazari (2009d), an academic and writer, writing in one of the most popular English newspapers argued:

It has now become routine for the US to focus on Pakistan's nuclear weapons whenever there is trouble within the country. Clearly, the US has not recovered from its trauma of seeing a developing Muslim state acquire nuclear capability. Moreover, as one of the greatest proliferators since 1945 to Israel, the US has always maintained hypocrisy over its non-proliferation stance and this has now been fully exposed with its 123 nuclear agreement with India¹.

¹The 123 nuclear agreement refers to section 123 of the United States Atomic Energy Act 1954, which was amended by the US government in 2008 to enter into an arrangement for cooperation with India in matters related to developing nuclear technology for civilian purposes.

The participants drew on the discourse that Pakistan and its citizens were treated unfairly by the West, especially in comparison to India. Natasha (F, FG6), said Pakistanis were themselves responsible for their negative image because:

...when I used to go in the street then it was full of Pakistanis – Pakistanis used to live there all the time – it was a whole Pakistani street. When I used to go there, there was trash everywhere. There was litter everywhere.

Mysha (F, FG6) said that Pakistanis had ‘no discipline, no organisation’. In response to Mysha’s statement, the following exchange took place.

Huma (F): Indians are the same – I mean they are no different.

Aan (F): Look, why do people have respect for Indians?

Mysha (F): Indians can hide – that’s what they do.

Natasha (F): They are intelligent – they are very intelligent – they hide what they can do...

(FG6)

From my personal experience of living in Pakistan, I know that the participants in the above exchange were drawing on the discourse of Hindus in India being clever people. This discourse posited that the Hindus were street-smart and were able to cover their tracks more effectively, when they did anything wrong.

The participants were quite strongly critical of their compatriots, especially the way in which they conducted themselves overseas. However, they also argued that Pakistan was unfairly treated because there were clear parallels with India but the latter was seldom the target of the West’s censure and criticism. This discourse of duplicity in the West’s policies and attitudes towards the two countries has been highlighted by different writers (e.g. Bahree, 2009; Choudhry, Mahsud, and Hasan; 2008, Mazari 2009f). Choudhry, Mahsud, and Hasan (2008) have argued that there is a qualitative difference in the relationships of the US and Britain with Pakistan and India. They maintain that this is because of economic and strategic benefits that Britain and the US perceive in their relationship with India. The Western world generally sees India as economically and militarily stronger than Pakistan and this relates to the discourse of hierarchy of countries discussed in chapter 3.

Notwithstanding the feeling of being treated unfairly in comparison to India, some participants expressed admiration for India and its people. For example, Aan (F, FG6) said:

Very lazy people [Pakistanis] – and you know, they are not hardworking at all. Like the Indians are very hardworking and they are always making things in their own country rather than importing it from other countries. So, when you start importing from other countries, you have to beg other people – we want money, because within the country you can't produce anything.

The discourse of India being a self-reliant country that was less dependent on foreign exports was a common one in Pakistan. This discourse posited Indians as hardworking people who were happy to use indigenously produced goods. This discourse presented India and its people in a position of strength as they were self-reliant and did not have to ask others for financial assistance.

In this section, I have demonstrated the participants' constructions of their country's eastern neighbour – India. They talked about the socio-political situation in that country and realised that on certain counts India had surpassed Pakistan. However, they also posited that Pakistan was often judged harshly and unfairly by the West, especially the US, in comparison with India. Even though India did not figure directly in the plethora of challenges that confronted Pakistan in the Wake of September 11, the difference in the US attitudes towards the two countries came into greater relief in the minds of most Pakistanis during that period. In the years following the September 11 attacks, most Pakistanis came to see the US as a fair-weather friend that had been highly manipulative and exploitative in its relations with their country. This perception was often sketched against a starkly different trajectory of the relationship between the world's lone superpower and an increasingly powerful India. This feeling was also perceptible in the discussions with some of the participants of this research. Notwithstanding drawing on the discourse of preferential treatment to India by the West, especially the US, some participants also admired the Indian people for their hard work and self-reliance.

6.1.2 Britain

In this section, I discuss participants' constructions of Britain. Britain occupies a special place in the imaginations of most Pakistanis, primarily due to the colonial connection.

In five out of six focus groups participants made references to Britain. The context and foci of these references were varied and complex.

Some participants used their understanding of British colonialism to make sense of some of the more recent international events. This they did this primarily in reference to the recent domination of the world by the US. British colonialism was something that the participants were familiar with and, therefore, used to understand the policies and actions of the US. For example, Maher (M, FG1) argued that what the US was doing was qualitatively different from British colonialism:

...the United States of America colonizing Iraq and Afghanistan – I think drawing that parallel with an imperialist power like Britain or France, I think that is incorrect...like Britain... went on explorations, on missions, and on their way, while going back, they realised there were a lot of resources, especially in the subcontinent and they decided to colonize those nations...that was what colonialists were doing but we are under the international system.

The above was said by Maher when a couple of other participants argued that what the US was doing was a new form of colonialism. A similar point was highlighted by Said (1978/1995: 285) when he said 'France and Britain no longer occupy center stage in world politics; the American imperium has displaced them.' Mysha (F, FG6) saw Britain and US in recent times as complicit in their attempts to gain control over the rest of the world. She said 'The main mission I believe for the British or the Americans is just to get power – gain power all over'. The constructions of the participants of the US foreign policy will be discussed in greater detail in one of the subsequent chapters. The participants demonstrated that they were aware of some of the fundamental features and dynamics of the colonization of the Indian Subcontinent. All Pakistanis are aware of their country's colonial past. There is a general realization that the relationship between their country and the erstwhile colonial power was exploitative and worked mostly to the advantage of the latter. However, there is little in the way of active, persistent resentment against Britain as a result of its past colonial exploits in the region. The following extract about Kashmir demonstrates this point.

Fahad (M): But, the British demarcated India. So, it is their plan that we have to follow. [**Various:** They gave it to Pakistan.]

Naveed: But, had they (British) felt so strongly about it, they wouldn't have left it like that.

Wafa (F): They gave it to the Indians themselves.

Saima (F): It was in a way because Mountbatten was there. Did he do something? If he so strongly felt that Kashmir was a part of Pakistan, he should have done something about it.

(FG2)

This acceptance, even legitimization, of the British intervention may very well be due to the fact that the political foundations of the Pakistani state are predicated upon a sharp distinction from India. It has been argued that Pakistani nationalism has its roots in Jinnah's efforts to rally the Indian Muslims as a separate nation based on their distinct religion and cultural heritage (Durrani and Dunne, 2010; Toor, 2005). Arguably, colonial control of India and the subsequent decision by the British government to grant India independence provided the Indian Muslims the opportunity to demand a separate state for themselves. Therefore, British colonialism rather than being seen primarily as an infringement of sovereign rights is seen by many Pakistanis as a political stage that paved the way for the creation of an independent state for the Indian Muslims.

Some references were also made to Britain in contexts other than its colonial link with Pakistan. In the first focus group, Salma said:

England is a welfare state, where, umm, where right now they have enough money to ensure that people are on a semi-equal footing, and then that is fine. See, that's *the* thing, people are on a semi-equal footing, that's fine. Elections and democracy is fine, as long as people are on an equal footing.

Salma was discussing with other participants in the group the problems associated with democracy in societies that were highly stratified and unequal. She knew that England was a welfare state and demonstrated awareness of the implications of this for a democratic system of governance. She argued that democracy worked well when there was at least a certain degree of equality in society.

In the fourth focus group, conducted quite soon after the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, references were made to Britain in the context of the London bombings. As I

have discussed in the previous chapter, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto made terrorist violence much more real and proximal in the consciousness of most Pakistanis. In the focus groups conducted after the assassination, issues of national and international security gained greater salience. Komal, one of the participants of focus group four said:

...it's not just limited to one country, it's influencing millions of miles away. Troops are in Iraq but you have bombing in Madrid, you have bombings in London, troops are in Iran, you have bombings let's say in Pakistan... No it's not just us, even the London bombings. Is London safe now? It's not!

Komal argued that terrorist violence had become a problem in many parts of the world, including Britain. However, such constructions of the larger world need to be contextualised by appreciating the atmosphere of shock and vulnerability that prevailed in the country as a result of instances of terrorist violence that shattered the peace and tranquillity of middle class urban Pakistan when some of the later focus groups for this study were conducted.

Another participant, Farah (F, FG4) referred to BBC television where she saw a talk show about issues related to terrorism where the audience comprised Arab citizens. This reference, as discussed in the methodology chapter, shows that the young people who participated in this study had access to various sources of information, including cable television because BBC is available for viewing in Pakistan only through this medium.

Two other participants' references to Britain are especially noteworthy. One of these was Afreen (F, FG3) and the other Natasha (F, FG6). Both these participants were British nationals and their families had moved back to Pakistan sometime back. Afreen's constructions of her relationship with Britain were complex and fraught with contradictions. Afreen in the focus group discussion very clearly identified with Britain and saw this as an important part of her personal identity. This is evident from the following extract:

But when someone asks me about being Pakistani and being British, what would you like to choose, on the basis of that I think I will just have to go with England.

Not only did Afreen very clearly identify with Britain but she also actively tried to distance herself from her Pakistani roots. She argued that ‘...Pakistan does not have any meaning – I don’t think much of Pakistan – personally’. These views were somewhat paradoxical given the fact that she talked at some length of her own and her peers’ experiences of Islamophobic attacks in Britain in the wake of the September 11 attacks:

And we did suffer back in home. Actually, we did suffer quite a few blows – our houses – our windows were broken. And some girls and some boys they were actually – it was actually a gang of friends who wore scarves and wore jubas [a special loose outer dress worn by some orthodox Muslim women], it was on that basis – violence, because quite a few people were injured, some broke their arms. I was just...

Like Afreen, Natasha (F, FG6) was also a British national and she too commented on her experiences of racism in Britain. She said that ‘When I go, like, back to England – when I go to England – when people call, like, they just look at you – if you are brown you are Paki – that’s it! You’re a Paki!’

In this section I discussed participants’ constructions of Britain. They made references to it in the context of the colonial connection between it their own country. Other topics mentioned by individuals were British democracy, the BBC, and racism against Pakistanis.

6.1.3 The United States of America

In this section, I discuss the participants’ constructions of the US as an economically and militarily powerful country, which had achieved the status of the world hegemon in the post-Cold war period. In all focus groups, references were made to the US as a powerful country that dominated the world.

Asma (F, FG1) said: ‘...America is powerful, it’s strong, it has the freedom, it has freedom of action’ Asma said this in the context of US invasion of Iraq. She was arguing that since the US was powerful it could do whatever it wanted, including attacking other countries. Asma constructed the US as a country that was militarily and economically powerful and, therefore, could attack other countries. Saira (F, FG 5) referred to the military might of the US that it used against other countries. She said that it was ‘the only country in the world that has actually used an atomic bomb’. She

said this in the context of US response to the September 11 attacks and its desire to restrain other countries from acquiring nuclear capabilities. Babur (M, FG 5) argued that America wanted the world to recognise its economic and military might:

America wants people to accept its might and its god-like status in the world. That is what America aims to do. And they even themselves say that we have the military might, we have the economic power and we want to rule the world in a way that, you know, benefits us and our people.

Babur said this in response to a question about the then prevailing international situation. According to him, the turmoil in the world at that time was a result of the US wish to dominate the world. Like Asma and Saira, he commented on the military and economic might of the US that it used to achieve its strategic objectives internationally. Natasha (F, FG 6) said that 'America controls everything'. She said this while discussing how the world could be made a safer place. Asma, Saira, Babur and Natasha while talking about the US being a powerful country were drawing on the discourse of hierarchy of nations, discussed in chapter 3.

Whereas most participants referred to the economic and military might of the US, some of them also referred to its status in the world as a superpower. Maher (M, FG 1) said '...at this point in time, we are living in a unipolar world, where one country has the power.'

Babur (M, FG 5) also referred to the US as a superpower, although his take on this was somewhat different; he said 'I think the superpower status of America will one day end because of its own mechanism.' Babur said this during a discussion about ways to resolve the international conflicts prevailing at that time. Earlier in the session, he argued that unless the economic and military power of the US declined there was no way to resolve those conflicts. Babur and other participants, referred to above, suggested that economically and militarily the US was a very powerful country and it was the sole superpower in the world. Layne (2006: 11) argues that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US became the world hegemon, which 'by definition [can exist only in a] unipolar' international space. In focus group 5, Tabish said that the US dominated the United Nations:

And now, umm, the entire UN, it is fully dominated by the US – fully dominated by the US, and a little bit by other countries who are supporters of US, in fact.

Tabish argued that the United Nations was dominated by the US and some other countries that were its supporters. Frezzo (2010: 28) refers to the UN as ‘the most prominent offshoot of US hegemony’. Nazemroaya (2012) argues:

The Security Council above all has been used by the US as a means of protecting its interests. The purpose of the Security Council veto is to reject any international resolutions and consensuses against the national interests (or more precisely the interests of the ruling elites) of the US and the other major post-World War II powers.

Many participants saw the US as a country that was economically and militarily strong and, hence, could do whatever it wanted, including influencing the UN. They argued that the US, capitalising on its economic and military might, pursued aggressive international policies to achieve its own strategic objectives.

Some participants posited that owing to its economic and military might and its status as the world hegemon, the US influenced the internal affairs of Pakistan. Commenting on the US role in Pakistani politics, Adil (M, FG4) said:

...we all know for a fact that we have to get in power in Pakistan, you are either pro-establishment or you have links with the USA. Besides that you can't come into power.

Adil's argument in the above excerpt drew on the discourse of US hegemony and its control over internal affairs of Pakistan. According to this discourse, Pakistan's internal affairs were controlled and manipulated by the US establishment. Shafqat (2009: 90) argues that there have been long-term strategic interests of the US in Pakistan:

...the U.S. has had an abiding interest specifically in Pakistan because of Pakistan's role in Cold War policies of containment, present-day concerns over Iran, the global war on terror, a Central Asian energy corridor and Pakistan's nuclear assets.

Komal (F, FG 4) said that what happened in the US elections was more important for Pakistan than the results of its own elections:

I think US elections are very crucial for us as well. Because our elections do not count for that much as American elections. It's not about who rules in Islamabad as much as it is about who rules in the Oval office. So, that's more important.

I know from my experience of living in the country that the discourse of US establishment manipulating the internal politics of Pakistan has been common. This discourse captured the imagination of many Pakistanis in the years after the September 11 attacks, especially when the Pakistan government decided to become an ally in the US led 'war on terror'. The US was able to manipulate the internal politics of Pakistan because:

The United States has traditionally been seen as a lender of the last resort by nearly all Pakistani rulers after the death of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in September 1948, hence gifting the world super power a golden opportunity to achieve its regional and strategic goals against pea-nuts only.

(Shah, 2013)

Thus, many participants argued that the US was a powerful country that had manipulated the internal affairs of Pakistan to achieve its strategic objectives in the region.

This section has demonstrated the participants' constructions of the US as a powerful country that was at the top of the hierarchy of nations. They argued that this position of the US was based on its military and economic strength, which gave it the status of the world's only superpower after the end of the Cold War. They also suggested that it wielded considerable political power internationally and exerted significant influence and control over the internal affairs of Pakistan. In the data analysed in this section, the participants drew on the discourses of hierarchy of nations and the US manipulation of the internal affairs of Pakistan.

6.2 Blocs of Countries

In this section, I discuss some blocs of countries that were referred to by the research participants. One of the participants, Maher (M, FG1) said:

...the world is unipolar... we might have powers coming up, like China, or even the EU, which might in future might come up, and, and establish a balance of power between America and rest of the world.

In the above excerpt, Maher was arguing that the world at that time was unipolar and the EU might at a later point time become a source of balance of power. Bloomfield (2008: 69) presents EU as a possible dominant player in the imminent 'demise of the unipolar world'. Maher (M, FG1) later on made another reference to the EU and said '...look at the Iran issue, where you have EU's three major players – Britain, Germany, and France mediating in the issue'. Here he was drawing on the discourse of the EU comprising of a hierarchy of countries – some more powerful and influential than the others. This discourse was discussed in chapter 3.

The participants referred to the idea of 'the West' as a group of countries comprising the industrialised countries of Europe and North America. Saima (F, FG2) said:

'...look at Iran...they had their differences with America and with most of the Western world... what they are doing right now is that they are developing these – nuclear capabilities'.

She was arguing that even though Iran had differences with the West, it did not resort to terrorism and focused instead on developing their 'nuclear capabilities'. She constructed the 'Western world' as a distinct entity, which included the US besides other countries. Komal (F, FG4) posited that the 'Western world' and 'Al-Qaeda' justified their actions using the discourse of protecting one's self-interests:

So you can't say we're wrong we are justified as long as we are protecting our interest, just like the US was doing it, just like as any other European nation or the Western World does it, so we're doing the same thing. It's justified from *their* end because they're sitting on the other table, on the other end of the table.

Zoya (F, FG4) argued that after the 911 attacks thousands of Muslims were rounded 'with no proof'. This according to her: 'would turn their hearts against the Western world'. She too maintained that the 'Western world' stood in opposition to the Muslim world. Another participant, Adil (M, FG4) said that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq transformed into 'a war between the West and Islam'. Komal (F, FG4), Zoya (F, FG4) and Adil (M, FG4) were drawing on the discourse of difference and antagonism

between the West and the Islamic world. This discourse captured popular imagination with the publication of Samuel Huntington's (1996/2002) controversial book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*.

Another bloc of countries that the participants referred to was the Islamic world. Harris (M, FG2) said that in retaliation to 911, the US attacked 'all Muslim countries'. Farah (F, FG4) argued that in response to 911 the US declared war against 'Islamic countries'. Farah identified the Islamic countries as a distinct bloc that had become pitched against the US in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Komal (F, FG4) also made a reference to this bloc. She posited that 'even...Muslim countries...admitted' that Afghanistan was controlled by a terrorist group. In this extract, Komal presented the Muslim countries as a distinct bloc of nation states. Tabish (M, FG5) and Aamer (M, FG5) also referred to 'Muslim nations' as a distinct bloc of countries that had become pitted against the West, especially the US. Huma (F, FG6) referred to all the Muslim countries as a distinct political entity who she lamented would not help Pakistan because it had isolated itself and by betraying them in order to appease the US. Natasha (F, FG6) and Aan (F, FG6) also referred to Muslims across the world as one group of people. The idea of Muslim nations as comprising a distinct bloc of countries joined together by a religious ideology draws on the discourse of Islam being not only a religious ideology but also a political ideal which unites all its followers into the 'Nation of Islam' (Crockatt, 2004: 127).

Maher (M, FG1) referred to Middle Eastern countries by using the concept of 'Greater Middle East'. He said:

...what I feel is that reasons for invading Iraq have...been varied, varied, have varied from finding weapons of mass destruction to ousting Saddam Hussain as a tyrant and his regime and even establishing the Greater Middle East concept which in...which would definitely, what the Americans say would inculcate democracy into the Middle East.

The discourse of 'Greater Middle East' was not what one would hear very commonly in everyday discussions and in the media when this focus group was carried out. Güney and Gökcan (2010: 22) argue that the idea of a Greater Middle East reflects a profound change in the 'geopolitical imagination of the USA' in the wake of September 11 attacks. Thus, Maher in this excerpt was drawing on a relatively less common

discourse, albeit an important one, related to September 11 attacks and the changes that took place in international politics as a result of these events. Just before referring to this, Maher also mentioned 'Greater Israel' by drawing on the discourse of enhanced American support for Israel in the context of the 'Greater Middle East'.

One participant, Fahad (M, FG2) referred to the Persian Empire and said that it did not allow trade with Muslims as a result of which the latter had to attack it. Fahad in this excerpt was drawing on the discourse of Muslim territorial expansionism during the early medieval period. Natasha (F, FG6) mentioned the Mughal Empire and cited their corruption as one of the main reasons for the decline of Muslim control over the Indian subcontinent.

Thus, the participants referred to various international political blocs, which included the EU, the Western world, the Middle East, including the notion of 'Greater Middle East', the Islamic countries. A few references were also made to political formations of the past which included the Persian and the Mughal Empires. It is pertinent to mention that the Islamic countries are usually mentioned as a distinct bloc of countries in Pakistan Studies textbooks (e.g. Rabbani, 2009). However, references to the EU and concepts like the 'Greater Middle East' are relatively rare (e.g. Khan, 2004; Rabbani, 2009). An association of countries that is frequently discussed in textbooks (e.g. Rabbani, 2009) but was not referred to by the young people who participated in my research, is the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), comprising Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan and Pakistan. Therefore, arguably, the participants made a selective use of the bloc of countries usually mentioned in the Pakistan Studies textbooks. This demonstrates that these young people drew on various sources of information and were not limited to their school textbooks for constructing their understanding of the world beyond Pakistan. The references to various political and ideological blocs represent the participants' constructions of political alliances and groupings in the international arena and serve as a backdrop for their analysing their constructions of international conflicts, discussed in the subsequent chapters.

6.3 Supranational Organisations

The participants' discussion of the international space was not confined to just other countries and blocs of countries. They also made numerous references to various supranational organisations like the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this section, I analyse the participants' constructions of some supranational organisations. These references demonstrate not just a good understanding of the geographical and territorial make-up of the international space but also their understanding of this space along political and legal lines.

Tabish (M, FG5) criticised the United Nations:

The United Nations – first of all I have objection to the veto powers of this. The entire world is equal. Why do you say that if this country had developed nuclear industries at first, so they have the right to veto the entire world – to go opposite to the entire world?! This is no logic!

Tabish in the above excerpt was criticizing the UN being dominated by the five permanent members of the Security Council, who have the veto power. He was particularly critical of the US who objected to other countries acquiring nuclear capabilities. Komal (F, FG4) referred to the IAEA while talking about Benazir Bhutto, who, according to Komal, shortly before her assassination, said that, if voted to power, she (Benazir) 'will hand over A. Q. Khan [Pakistan's controversial nuclear scientist] to IAEA and help the international inspectors to protect the nukes of Pakistan'.

Maher (M, FG1), while talking about the US response to the September 11 attacks, argued that the US was not justified in attacking Iraq and Afghanistan in the wake of the September 11 attacks. He distinguished that state of affair from an ideal international situation 'where every country lives by those laws, as perhaps prescribed by the United Nations Charter'. He argued that individual nation states, specifically the US, should not resort to use of violence against other countries as there were well-defined systems and institutions in place that they could take recourse to. He said:

Maher (M): What I feel is that you have a system of international law, under which we currently function – we have United Nations in place, we have International Court of Justice in place, we have International Court of Arbitration, criminal courts, and war crimes tribunals, lots of international systems, humanitarian laws, Geneva Convention etc.

In the above excerpt, Maher was talking about the international space and the various supranational bodies that existed in order to arbitrate disputes and conflicts between the various sovereign states. He argued that there were supranational agencies whose primary role was to arbitrate disputes between different countries. Maher over here was drawing on the legalist discourses of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* of the modern episteme, discussed in chapter 3. Amin (M, FG1) asked Maher whether he still would have been against the Iraq war even if the United Nations had authorised it. By referring rhetorically to the UN as the international legal authority, he too was drawing on the legalist discourses of *jus ad bellum* of the modern episteme discussed in the literature review.

This section demonstrates some research participants' constructions of some of the supranational bodies that were relevant in the context of international conflicts.

6.4 Marxism, Socialism and Capitalism

In this section, I discuss the use of the discourses of Marxism, socialism and capitalism by the participants of one focus group. In focus group one there was an extended discussion about widespread inequality and social disparity in the world. In this discussion the participants used ideas like capitalism, Marxism, and socialism to make their point. For example, Salma (F, FG1) said:

I'm still a socialist, I was a semi-Marxist sometime ago. Umm, I think it's important that, umm, you have laws that ensure that people or competition, whatever happens, it happens on an equal footing.

Salma's recourse to the Marxist discourse was remarkable, considering that she was an A-level student and would not have come across it in her Pakistan Studies textbooks (e.g. Khan, 2004; Rabbani, 2009). Moreover, it was quite unlikely that she encountered the discourse on popular media. Most likely, she came across this either in discussions within her families or through reading of relevant literature. Her recourse to the Marxist discourse demonstrates her privileged, upper middleclass upbringing. Salma was arguing about some of the issues that had plagued the democratic system and institutions of Pakistan. Drawing on the classical Marxist discourse, she criticised the capitalist system:

Salma (F, FG1) : In the case, in the case of socialism, umm, I mean, okay, if you have, if for example, if you're talking from a perfect capitalistic world, the world we live in today, we see these wide gaps between the rich and the poor.

She used the Marxist discourse to criticise the social inequalities and injustices inherent in Pakistani society. In order to substantiate her point, she compared Pakistan with England and highlighted that the latter was a welfare state and people there were to some extent equal. Salma used the discourses of Marxism and capitalism to analyse and talk about the socio-economic organisation of different societies and the implications of these for systems of governance and democratic processes. Maher (M, FG1) tried to counter Salma's argument and said 'the whole idea of capitalism is giving everyone a chance.'

Maher (M, FG1) challenged Salma's claim that socialist societies are more egalitarian and free.

We have examples of China, where in the Tiananmen Square students were protesting and tanks came and rolled over those students. And why? They were simply protesting! I think, when you're saying that freedom only exists in Marxist, communist systems... Marxism and communism cannot guarantee equal footing...

Maher challenged Salma's discourse of Marxism and the benefits of living in a Marxist society. It is pertinent to mention that when the Tiananmen Square massacre took place in 1989 – a time when the participants of my research would have been only a couple of years old. Maher could not have remembered the media reports of the incidents but must have either heard or read the accounts later on. Moreover, events like the Tiananmen Square massacre were not very directly relevant to the everyday lives of the research participants and they would not have come across these in their school textbooks (e.g. Khan, 2004; Rabbani, 2009). Maher used the discourse of the Tiananmen Square incident to counter Salma's discourse of the benefits of Marxism. Salma, however, did not give up and presented further arguments to augment her original position:

The problem right now is that for example, our proletariat, the working class, or the lower class, or the middle class, which forms a very large part of our

population, today what happens is that they work for survival. They work for a right that should be given to them without having to work for it.

The above excerpt demonstrates that Salma was not using the Marxist discourse in a superficial and simplistic way. She used it in a way that showed her understanding of some of the basic tenets of the classical Marxist theory. For example, in the above extract she employed the discourse of the exploitation of the workers by the owners of the means of production in a capitalist society. Using this discourse, she made a profound philosophical argument that people should be able to survive without having to work for it. This is one of the key features of the classical Marxist discourse critiquing the capitalist societies where workers have to toil and labour arduously to earn mere sustenance for themselves and their families (Marx, 1891/1933, 1865/1965; Althusser, 2008). Salma argued that the 'the fundamental thing that is wrong with this world is that you have to work to survive'. The solution that she offered to this problem was 'a redistribution of wealth'.

Another participant, Ahmer (M, FG1) took issue with Salma's position and said:

Salma, Russia had been an egalitarian society for so long, eventually the system collapsed, and...Now we have the gaps widening again. We have the gaps in China widening...

Ahmer argued that Russia and China which were communist countries had begun to encounter social and economic problems. Whereas the communist ideology that purportedly underpins the social organisation in these countries champions an egalitarian society, the reality has not always been so. For example, Fuchs and Demko (1979) argue that in the USSR and various Eastern European socialist countries there were widespread geographical inequalities.

Maher (M, FG1) argued that in a socialist society individuals lose their freedom:

... [in] socialism, ... Amin and I are going to be the same individuals. We're going to have the same kind of shoes, the same kind of shirts, the same kind of watches, and we are going to be the same kind of individuals. We are not going to have any – in proposing that kind of system – we're not going to have any political freedoms at all.

Ahmer added 'that you lose your political freedom when you accept such a system'. Salma countered these criticisms by attributing these views to 'the propaganda that America and the western world has launched against socialism for a very long time'.

This section has shown that participants in one focus group analysed the then prevailing socio-economic situation of Pakistan by drawing on the discourses of Marxism, egalitarianism, and capitalism. They discussed the socio-economic organisation of various countries to analyse the conditions prevailing in Pakistan when the focus group was carried out. They used this discussion to appraise the state of democracy and political governance in Pakistan. This section demonstrates some of the complex sociological discourses that the participants drew while talking about their own countries. As discussed in chapter 5, participants in other focus groups also discussed issues related to social inequality in Pakistan without explicitly drawing on the discourses of Marxism and capitalism. However, since specific questions related to these were not asked in any of the focus groups, it cannot be assumed that participants in other focus groups would not have used these discourses if specifically asked to do so.

6.5 Discussion

In this chapter, I have analysed the research participants' constructions of the wider world, beyond Pakistan. While talking about the wider world they made references to numerous countries. There were wide variations in the frequency, detail and the context in which these references were made. Numerous references were made to countries in Asia and the Middle East. Five countries were mentioned very frequently. These were India, Britain, the US, Afghanistan and Iraq. I discussed the first three in this chapter. References to the other two were almost exclusively in the context of post-September 11 conflicts and are analysed in chapters 8 and 9.

I also discussed the participants' constructions of various blocs of countries like the EU and the Western and the Islamic worlds. At times, they constructed the Islamic countries as a unified entity by drawing on the discourse of a supranational religious ideology. They often argued that the Western countries, especially the US, were pursuing an anti-Muslim agenda. They often did this by drawing on the discourse of antagonism between the West and the Islamic world.

I analysed the participants' constructions of some supranational organisations like the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency. In the final section, I discussed the use of the discourses of Marxism, socialism and capitalism by the participants of one focus group. They used these discourses to analyse the then prevailing socio-economic conditions in Pakistan and the implications of these for political governance and democratic processes in the country.

This chapter has shown that the research participants' constructions of the world beyond Pakistan were varied and complex. Whereas religion was a significant factor in their articulation of international affairs, they did not use it as the sole perspective to frame the wider world and the interaction of nation states within it. Their constructions of the world beyond Pakistan were in contrast to those of the children who participated in the research study conducted by Durrani and Dunne (2010) in state schools in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. These children constructed the wider world almost exclusively along the lines of religion. As discussed in chapter 5, their national identities were secondary to their religious identities. Islam was used by them to divide the world into two binary oppositions – the Muslim and infidel camps. In the case of the young people who participated in my research, religion comprised *one* significant dimension that they used to talk about the world. They drew on a range of other political, sociological geographical and economic discourses to construct the wider world.

This chapter along with chapter 5 forms the backdrop for the discussion in subsequent chapters which focus on international conflicts.

7 Pakistan-India Conflicts

The main focus of my research was on the young people's constructions of international conflicts. The conflict that they talked about the most included the September 11 attacks and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq by the US and its allies as part of the 'war on terror'. Analysis of this is the main focus of the next chapter. Another conflict that they talked about, albeit not in as much detail as the September 11 attacks and the subsequent 'war on terror', was that between Pakistan and India, which is analysed in this chapter. In five out of six focus groups, the participants referred to the longstanding conflict between their own country and its eastern neighbour – India. Many of them also saw India as a traditional adversary and they made frequent references to the longstanding conflict and disputes with it. The data related to Pakistan-India conflicts, which is analysed here, did not come out of any specific questions focused on the issue. In most cases, the participants talked about this conflict to illustrate points they had been trying to make in response to questions about international conflicts in general. While doing so, they drew on many of the discourses discussed in chapter 3. I begin by presenting a brief historical backdrop for and a timeline of some of the salient events in the relationship between the two countries. Next, I analyse the participants' constructions of the causes of Pakistan-India conflicts. This is followed by a discussion of their arguments about how these conflicts have been played out – warfare, terrorism and destabilization.

7.1 Salient Events in Pakistan-India Relations

In this section, I provide brief background information about the hostile relationship between Pakistan and India since their independence from British colonial rule in 1947. This will help in contextualizing and understanding the data, especially for those readers who might not be very familiar with the complex international dynamics between the two countries. Pakistan and India are located in South Asia and share a long border with one another. The socio-political circumstances that led to the creation of these two independent, sovereign countries are outlined in chapter 5.

The bitter resentment of Hindu nationalists against the division of India based on the 'two nation ideology' set the scene for the subsequent relationship between the two nascent countries. The Indian nationalists saw Pakistan as an irreparable loss to their

homeland's geographical and ideological integrity whereas the Pakistanis articulated their national identity by distancing and distinguishing themselves from India. The discourse of there being a distinct Muslim identity, predicated on a fundamental ideological difference from the Hindus, is common in Pakistan Studies textbooks. For example:

The Indian Muslims had a distinctive national identity of their own which they wanted to preserve and promote at all cost. All the Muslim leaders from Mujadid Alf Sani to Quaid-e-Azam struggled hard for the protection and safeguard [sic] the national identity of Muslims and the demand for Pakistan was, in fact, made in 1940 for the protection and safeguard of the national character of the Muslims of India.

(Rabbani, 2009:66)

This ideological conflict between the two countries was further aggravated by a dispute over the princely state of Kashmir which started soon after the creation of the two countries and remains a highly contentious issue well into the 21st century, when this thesis was written. The timeline in box 7.1 highlights some key moments in the tumultuous relationship between the two countries which share a long geographical border, cultural traditions and natural resources like rivers.

Box 7.1 – A timeline of salient events in the turbulent relationship between Pakistan and India

1940: Jinnah appropriated the two nation theory into the manifesto of the All India Muslim League.

1947: The parliament of the United Kingdom passed the Indian Independence Act, announcing the partition of India into two sovereign states – Pakistan and India.

1947: The first Pakistan-India war over the disputed state of Kashmir, ending with the creation of ceasefire line, dividing Kashmir into two, one controlled by Pakistan and the other by India.

1948: UN Security Council recommended plebiscite in Kashmir through resolution 47.

1965: The second Pakistan-India war, started along the South-Western border, later shifting to the ceasefire line between the Pakistan and Indian held Kashmir.

1971: The third Pakistan-India war. India supported to separatist insurgents in East Pakistan,

leading to the creation of Bangladesh in December 1971.

1972: Pakistan and India signed Simla Agreement, agreeing to resolve longstanding disputes through negotiations. Ceasefire line renamed as the line of control (LOC)

1974: India detonated its first nuclear device.

1989: Formal movement for independence began in Indian held Kashmir. Pakistan extended political, diplomatic, and moral support to the movement. New Delhi argued that the armed insurgents had military and logistic support from Islamabad.

1998: India conducted underground nuclear tests. Pakistan responded with similar tests.

1999: Indian air-strikes against Pakistani forces along the LOC, followed by Pakistan counter-offensive. This ultimately led to General Musharraf's coup d'état removing Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government.

2001: Indian Parliament attacked. New Delhi blamed Pakistan-based militants.

2008: Attacks and sieges in Mumbai. New Delhi blamed Pakistan-based militant organizations. Bilateral peace talks suspended.

(summarized from BBC News, 2011)

Having provided a brief time line of key events in the tumultuous relations of Pakistan and India, I now discuss in the participants' constructions of the conflict between India and Pakistan.

7.2 Pakistan and India – Causes of Conflict

In this section, I analyse the participants' constructions of the causes of conflict between Pakistan and India. They saw Pakistan and India as inevitable adversaries.

Babur (M, FG5) said:

You know, we have security issues – we are surrounded by adversaries on all sides of the border, except for China and Iran. Afghanistan is a security problem for us; India has been since our independence.

As indicated above, the modern Pakistani and Indian states are predicated on a discourse of mutual hostility that positions them as each other's traditional, permanent adversary. Adil (M, FG4) said: '...you see, we tend to forget that India has been our number one enemy, and it will be our number one enemy despite whatever we think it is.' Adil said this during a discussion about the deteriorating law and order

situation in Pakistan at the time when this research was carried out. As can be seen from the timeline of Pakistan-India relations, the two nations have not only fought three major wars but they have also tried to covertly destabilise each other internally. This is a conflict that started with the creation of the two countries in 1947 and continued well into the 21st century. Thus, India is etched as an unrelenting foe on the Pakistani consciousness.

Malihah (F, FG3) said ‘...for example, Pakistan and India – there is no use of war – Pakistan and India are in a constant conflict since 1947’. As illustrated in an extract quoted in chapter 5, the participants referred back to the pre-partition period and the British thinking about the accession of the princely state of Kashmir. In response to a question from me about two parties not being able to see each other’s point of view, Fahad (M, FG2) said ‘India and Pakistan are classic examples.’

The participants referred to various causes of conflict between Pakistan and India. One of the causes of conflicts mentioned by the participants related to the way in which India was partitioned. At the time of the partition, there were 580 princely states in India (Global Perspectives, 2014). The last Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten left the decision regarding the accession of these states to the discretion of their respective rulers at that time. Whereas many of these states acceded either with India or Pakistan in a straightforward manner, the process turned out to be extremely complicated and fraught with difficulties for the princely state of Kashmir. Saba (F, FG3) identified the princely states of Kashmir and Hyderabad as a cause of conflict and argued that Pakistan was justified in fighting India because the latter had taken something that was rightfully Pakistan’s:

Like we fight for Kashmir – why – because it was our right. Like when the boundaries were drawn, you know, at partition, it was our right. We never, but, still India, like many...Hyderabad – the princely states – if that was taken that was wrong. Like that is not wrong when it’s our right and we have to fight – then we have to fight.

Saba argued that the use of violence was justified when another country usurped the right of one’s own country. She legitimized Pakistan’s acts of aggression towards India by drawing on the discourse of punishing the wrongdoer and taking back what was rightfully one’s own, discussed in chapter 3.

At the time of the partition, Lord Mountbatten took the position 'that the ruler of each princely state should decide whether to merge his state with India or Pakistan, taking into account the geography of the state and the wishes of the population' (Global Perspectives, 2014). The criteria for the accession of these states was left vague and on the discretion of the respective rulers by the British establishment at the time of the partition of India (Global Perspectives, 2014). However, Pakistan Studies textbooks often contain discourses that present the issue of accession of princely states in black and white terms:

In the partition plan, it was unanimously decided regarding independent states like Kashmir, Hyderabad, Junagadh, that the future of these states would be determined by the peoples of these states by plebiscite. But contrary to all rules of ethics, India backed out of the plan, and forcibly occupied a considerable portion of Kashmir, which is still run by Indian Government.

(Rabbani, 2009: 204-5)

Thus, when Saba claimed that Kashmir 'was our right' she was drawing on the discourse of India usurping Kashmir, as presented in the Pakistan Studies textbooks that the young people who participated in my research would have studied.

Maher (M, FG1) identified another cause of conflict between Pakistan and India. He referred to the dispute over water resources. He said 'even Pakistan has the right to attack India on the premise that it is building Baglihar Dam'. India started building the Baglihar dam in 1999, on the river Chenab that flows through the Pakistani and Indian sides of the Punjab. Pakistan maintained that through building this dam India had violated the Indus Water Treaty (World Bank, 1960). In the above-quoted excerpt, Maher (M, FG1) was speaking rhetorically. In fact, as he continued to speak, he rejected the building of the Baglihar dam as a just cause of war for Pakistan. He argued that a nation's self-interest did not constitute a just cause of war because the contemporary world had a 'system of international law'. Thus, Maher challenged the discourse of national self-interest as a just cause of war by drawing on the discourse of international legal order discussed in chapter 3.

Adil (M, FG4) identified another cause of conflict between Pakistan and India – the latter's actions resulting in the decline of Pakistan's economy because of the loss of East Pakistan. He said:

As a Pakistani I would like to say that we tend to forget the fact that Pakistan was a very booming economy during the 1970s and after that we couldn't recover from the loss of Bangladesh.

Adil (M, FG4) argued that Pakistan had been doing quite economically till the country lost its eastern half in 1971. He posited that Pakistan could not recover from this loss.

Commenting on the loss of East Pakistan Yadav and Barwa (2011) write:

With the loss of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh, Pakistan suffered not only a significant decisive military defeat but also lost an important economic base, given the importance of fiscal contributions by East Pakistan which was disproportionately used to benefit investment in West Pakistan and to fund military expenditures.

The loss of East Pakistan was, indeed, a very serious economic, political, strategic and military blow to Pakistan which exacerbated the feeling that 'India dwarfs Pakistan in population, economic strength and military might' (Stern, 2000: 115). Thus, the secession of East Pakistan has been etched as a painful reminder of Indian hostility against Pakistan. Many Pakistan Studies textbooks (e.g. Khan, 2004; Rabbani, 2009) contain the discourse of Indian hostility in the context of the loss of East Pakistan:

In August 1971, India...became fully equipped for dismembering Pakistan. In November 1971, Indian troops started crossing the international boundary and entering East Pakistan. 'Mukhti Bahini', the terrorist wing of the Awami League, started attacking Pakistan Army's positions with the help of Indian army.

(Khan, 2004: 60)

In the third focus group, the participants identified another cause of Pakistan-India conflict – the repeated failure of peace talks:

Naveed: Then what you are saying is that there are some wars that are justified?

Malihah (F): There are *some* justified wars.

Saba (F): ...like peace-talks and peace-talks – we've done a lot of peace-talks with India. Fine? About Kashmir, I think, after every two months a convention is held on Kashmir...people [**Hafsa:** They're suffering.], you know, nothing is happening. So, what can...and then a war is going to take place – that's it!

As can be seen from the above excerpt, the participants were discussing situations in which war could be a justified course of action. Saba presented the Kashmir issue as a case in point where resort to war might have been justified because nothing came out of the 'peace talks'. She argued that in the case of Kashmir war was the only option because other options had repeatedly failed. In arguing so she was drawing on the one of the discourses of just causes of war – the discourse of war as the last resort, which was discussed in chapter 3. It would have been interesting to follow up with Malihah and ask her to explain why she said that some wars were justified because in an extract quoted earlier, she said that wars between Pakistan and India were quite pointless, whereas, here she claimed that there were some wars that were 'justified'. It would have been interesting to ask her which wars she considered 'justified'. I decided not to do this, as it would have curtailed the spontaneous flow of the discussion, which, as discussed in chapter 4, is an important feature of focus groups.

This section has demonstrated the participants' constructions of the causes of Pakistan-India conflicts as relating to the original partition of India, to economic issues, and the repeated failure of peace talks. While talking about the causes of conflicts between Pakistan and India, the discourses of causes of conflict that they drew upon included punishing the wrongdoer, taking back what is rightfully one's own, the international legal order, and war as the last resort.

7.3 The Conduct of Pakistan-India Conflicts

In this section, I discuss participants' constructions of the conduct of Pakistan-India conflicts. They talked about three different ways of conducting international conflicts – conventional wars, terrorism and destabilization of the adversary state. I discuss each of these in turn.

7.3.1 Pakistan India Conflicts as Conventional Wars

In this section, I analyse the participants' constructions of the Pakistan-India conflicts as conventional wars. In focus group two a discussion about ethics of warfare was taking place and one participant, Fareeha (F, FG2) said:

...if you take the war of for example 1965 – Pakistan-India War that would be classified as a *war*, because it happened on the border. There, no direct civilians were affected in it. It was between the armies.

Fareeha argued that the 1965 India-Pakistan conflict was a war that was fought along the border and neither of the two armies targeted civilian populations. She was drawing on one of the discourses of ethical conduct in war or *jus in bello* – the discourse of preventing harm to non-combatants – discussed in chapter 3. She maintained that the 1965 Pakistan-India conflict was a war because the civilian population were not harmed.

In the same focus group as above, the following discussion took place:

Saima (F): The ethics come in when the civilians, and when the people who are not directly involved they are attacked.

...

Fahad (M): When Pakistan and India were having a war, they were using – tanks, grenades and everything. There are some villages, you know, on the border, they were affected. And, I guess, both the armies just could not help it.

Harris (M): One thing – why they couldn't help it? Why didn't India and Pakistan come to some agreement that this shouldn't happen? [**Fareeha:** Exactly!]

Saima (F): To some extent it is understandable, but don't go to a major level, you know, don't let destruction happen to innocent people.

(FG2)

Fahad argued that during Indo-Pakistan conflict some villages along the border were affected. But this, according to him, was beyond the control of the two warring armies; the damage that occurred in the civilian areas was unintentional and unavoidable. Fahad was drawing on the discourse of collateral damage, discussed in chapter 3.

However, Harris and subsequently Fareeha challenged what he said and argued that civilians should not have been affected. In doing so, both of them were drawing on the discourse of preventing harm to non-combatants. In the above excerpt, Saima said that *some* harm to civilian noncombatants was understandable but this should not be on a large scale. Here, like Fahad, she was drawing on the discourse of collateral damage.

In focus group 2, the participants also drew on an example from medieval Indian history to talk about harm to non-combatants and civilian property. They cited the example of Mahmud Ghaznavi who was the ruler of the state of Ghzani – a region in modern Afghanistan – during the 11th century. Ghaznavi, who was a Muslim, invaded India on seventeen occasions, each time returning with the valuables that he and his army seized (Story of Pakistan, 2003). The following discussion took place:

Fahad (M): ...the people who think that Mahmud Ghaznavi was, you know, an Islamic warrior [**Fareeha:** ...that was wrong] that was wrong. He was just a **Fareeha (F):** That was wrong. He was plundering!] – He was just a plunderer...He made sixteen raids to India. He used to come, he used to take people to go, to back to Afghanistan with him, along with their belongings. They used to slaughter the people – the men – and used to keep their womenfolk.

...

Mansoor (M): You aren't supposed to just kill, take their belongings –

Fareeha (F): Exactly, pick up all the gold from the Somnaat Temple [a Hindu Temple in India that Mahmud Ghaznavi attacked, during his invasion of India]. The only reason he, like, attacked the Somnaat Temple was – fine, it might be at the background, like, yes, spread Islam, destroy the temple. But it was full of gold.

Fahad (M): Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) never did that. Hazrat Omar [the second caliph of Islam after the Prophet] when he used to conquer, he used to pray in the church.

Fareeha (F): How can you actually justify that – burning the temple? Hazrat Omar even got churches built, for the common public, in those areas. You can't justify a person going and destroying holy places!

...

Fahad (F): Yeah, exactly. If you had invaded the subcontinent, alright fine, then you should have sent a regional representative, you shouldn't have plundered the subcontinent so many times. [**Fareeha (F):** Exactly!]

Wafa (F): They go and kill innocent people, and –

Fahad (M): Mass destruction –

Wafa (F): Yeah.

...

Fahad (M): Wars are between armies, mostly, and that's what we are trying to establish that, you know, there should be some ethics to war, and the civilians – the populated areas should not be affected.

(FG2)

Fahad, in the above quoted extract, was criticizing the actions of Mahmud Ghaznavi. He argued that Ghaznavi repeatedly invaded India and plundered its wealth, killed people and took away the women. Fahad (M, FG2) said this in the context of discussion of ethical warfare or *jus in bello*, especially the principle of preventing harm to enemy non-combatants. Killing people who had not committed any act of aggression and taking hostage the women constituted unethical violence for Fahad. For him, material gain and aggrandizement did not constitute a just cause of war – it was simply a case of plundering other people.

In the above extract, the participants identified 'plundering' as unethical and contrasted this with the example set by Prophet Mohammad and Caliph Omar who, they said, had never done what Ghaznavi did, and respected the civilian population, including their places of worship.

This section has demonstrated the constructions of the participants of one focus group of some of the Pakistan-India conflicts as constituting conventional wars because these were fought between armies and civilian non-combatants were usually not harmed. The participants also brought up an example from the medieval history of the Indian sub-continent to illustrate their position on the principle of preventing harm to non-combatants. While doing so they cited the example of Prophet Mohammad and Caliph Omar who respected the civilian population, including their places of worship.

7.3.2 The Genesis of Terrorism

In this section, I analyse the participants' constructions of another form of the Pakistan-India conflicts – terrorism. I do this by discussing the participants' accounts of how the Pakistan-India conflicts over Kashmir evolved into unconventional warfare, including the use of terrorist violence. One participant, Saba (F, FG3) said:

Like Kashmir issue has been there since, I think, Pakistan came into existence. So what's the end – we have like thousands of talks. After every two-three months, like, no, in the news, every day, there is, I don't know, like many Muslims in Kashmir are killed – and after two or three months there are talks, with, umm, no end and conclusion. So, the last thing is guerilla war.

Saba, in the above extract, referred to the long history of the Kashmir dispute. She highlighted the futility of the peace-talks between the two countries. In an excerpt quoted in section 7.2, she maintained that Kashmir should have been rightfully a part of Pakistan. She argued that due to the repeated failure of the peace-talks and Pakistan's rightful claim on Kashmir, there was no other option but to resort to guerilla war.

Some other participants in this focus group also alluded to the failure of the peace negotiations between India and Pakistan. They cited the repeated failure of the peace-talks and the continued agony and suffering of the Kashmiri Muslims as the main factor that led the Kashmiri freedom fighters to adopt unconventional strategies like guerilla warfare. During the course of a discussion about the repeated failure of peace talks between Pakistan and India regarding Kashmir, Annum (F, FG3) said: 'Because they're fed up of all these peace-talks and this and that. And, so, now they have to do suicide bombings.'

The discourse of evolution of conventional war into terrorist tactics used by some of the participants is noteworthy because some writers and commentators have also analysed this metamorphosis (e.g. Gregory & Fair, 2008; Stern, 2000). For example, Stern (2000) argues that Pakistan on realizing its relative lack of economic and military strength compared to its archenemy, after the secession of its eastern half, increasingly started turning a blind eye to, if not actively supporting, guerrilla warfare and militant activity in the Indian held Kashmir. Similarly, Bhatt (2003) argues that much of the militant insurgency in the Indian held Kashmir is a direct and inevitable

result of years of brutal and inhumane oppression perpetrated by the Indian government through its large contingent of troops in the Kashmir valley. According to Bhatt (2003: 219) at the turn of the century the Indian government had 'deployed over 600,000 soldiers in the valley'. This made Kashmir, with a total population of 13 million, the place with the highest troops to civilian population ratio anywhere in the world.

When some of the participants explained the metamorphosis of the Kashmir conflict into guerilla warfare and other unconventional strategies in terms of the repeated failure of peace-talks and continued suffering of the Kashmiri people, I asked them if terrorist tactics were then justified in the context of Kashmir:

Naveed: So, then any terrorism that goes on in Kashmir then you feel that is justified?

Hafsa (F): No.

Saba (F): No, that's not justified.

Naveed: But aren't they doing it for a cause?

Various: They are –

Saba (F): That's the wrong way. If you have no answer then you fight with your country, so that, you know, like...The mujahideen (freedom fighters) they fight – they should come to Pakistan Army and then, you know, they have, like, terrorist people if they are very interested in suicide bombings then they should join the Pakistan Army and then serve their country. And, then, they – if there is a war or something, then they can, you know—

(Focus Group 3)

Even though the participants in focus group 3 said that there was no tangible outcome either of the continual peace talks or of the conventional wars the two countries had fought over Kashmir, they were quite unequivocal about denouncing the use of terrorist violence in Kashmir. They said that the use of terrorism by the Kashmiri people could not be justified to achieve their aims. Saba (F, FG3) argued that the insurgents were adopting the wrong way for achieving their objectives. She was of the view that if they felt so strongly about the issue then they should have joined the Pakistan army and fought the Indian occupation forces. In making this argument, she

was drawing on the discourse that legitimate wars are the ones that are fought between armies of sovereign states, which, in turn, is part of the wider discourse of national sovereignty and legitimate authority that emerged in the Modern Episteme as a result of the Treaty of Westphalia (see chapter 3). Notwithstanding the fact that they identified credible reasons underlying the adoption of terrorist tactics by the Kashmiri freedom fighters, participants in the group argued that the use of such strategies was unacceptable. While denouncing the use of terrorist violence they were drawing on the various discourses of *jus in bello* that emerged in Medieval Christian and Modern Epistemes discussed in chapters 3. Barring the discourse of supreme emergency, all other discourses of ethical warfare construct the use of terrorist tactics as ethically unacceptable. I specifically asked this group about the use of suicide bombing by the Kashmiri insurgents:

Naveed: All right you've mentioned suicide bombings. So, do you think the use of suicide is a reasonable tactic to achieve your goals?

All: No...

Naveed: No it isn't?

Iman (F): Not at all.

Naveed: Not at all? All of you feel that?

All: Yes!

(FG3)

Whereas the participants in this focus group said they sympathized with the plight of Kashmiri people and understood their reasons for extreme desperation, they did not agree that this justified the adoption of terrorist tactics. The participants problematized the Kashmir issue and argued that notwithstanding being victims of extreme forms of torture, the use of terrorism was unacceptable.

Bhatt (2003) argues that in the context of the Kashmir dispute and the related violence, the Kashmiri insurgency and Pakistan's covert support for it cannot be seen merely through the simplistic lens of terrorism and Jihadi violence. He argues: 'Kashmiri youth, finding no recourse for their political disaffection, have readily turned to Islamic militancy as a moral and political refuge' (Bhatt 2003: 221). He argues that demonizing the response of the Kashmiri people to their disenfranchisement and the

aggression of the Indian army is to overlook the complexity and the multilayered nature of the situation in the valley.

Participants in focus group three made no attempt to describe India as the evil, aggressive 'Other'. What they did, however, was identify the factors that led to the metamorphosis of the Kashmir conflict into an unconventional warfare. Notwithstanding the reasons, drawing on the discourses of *jus in bello*, they unanimously and unequivocally denounced terrorism. I then asked them what led people to use tactics like suicide bombings:

Naveed: So, what do you think are reasons that drive people to use such extremely violent ways and tactics?

Annum (F): Like, for example in Kashmir, if there are no – if there is no, umm, like final opinion of the politicians – that they are not reaching to the point. Now, so, the people living there are just fed up of this because their children, their mothers and their sisters, they all are insulted. So, they – the army of India, they are just treating them as animals of some kind. So, they *have* to – I think, they are suicidal just to self or self-defence –

Iman (F): I think, it's the emotions – you use your emotions and you have to be rational – when you use your emotions then you go for suicide bombings.

Malihah (F): Because you see the terrorists they aren't the, you know, solution...

(FG3)

It was clear that the participants said that they understood the reasons why some Kashmiri people resorted to terrorism as a strategy for self-defence and revenge but they argued that that was unacceptable because it was an emotional rather than a rational response and it did not result in a solution to the problems.

Thus, the participants talked about terrorism in relation to the conflict in Kashmir. While they identified some of the factors that resulted in people turning to terrorism, they rejected it as unethical.

7.3.3 The Destabilization of Pakistan

In this section, I analyse some participants' arguments about India playing out its conflict with Pakistan by trying to destabilise it. In addition to conventional wars and terrorisms, some of the participants identified a third way in which conflicts are played out – destabilization. In focus groups five and six, participants mentioned India, while discussing the then recent deterioration of law and order situation and the sharp rise in terrorist activities and the resultant destabilization witnessed in Pakistan. For example, Tabish (M, FG 5) alluded to India as one of the possible backstage players responsible for orchestrating the violence in Pakistan as an act of retaliation:

Tabish (M, FG 5): Yeah, that's what I mean. You can see it as a retaliation of India – they might blame the Delhi bomb blasts at Pakistan – the ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence – Pakistan Army's intelligence wing] did it and the RAW did that, let's do the same to Pakistan

Here Tabish was arguing that the violence in Pakistan could be seen as a retaliation of the Indian Intelligence Service (RAW). Pakistan and India have a history of secretly trying to destabilize each other (Stern, 2000). There are clear parallels between the Indian tactics in East Pakistan in the 1960s and the Pakistani strategy in the Indian-held Kashmir since the large-scale independence movement that started there in the late 1980s. India has blamed a number of terrorist activities on its soil on militants sponsored by Pakistan. In response, Pakistan has pointed the finger at India for many of the incidents of violence within its own borders. These accusations are frequently reported in the electronic and print media of the two countries. Thus, when Tabish alluded to India as one of the forces behind the unrest Pakistan, he was drawing on a common discourse in Pakistan about India trying to destabilize Pakistan by supporting militant insurgency in the country. Aan (F, FG 6) also mentioned that 'India is waging a war – they say that they are going to...retaliate for what they've done in Mumbai'. Similarly, Natasha (F, FG6) mentioned that India was trying to destabilize Pakistan and 'break us apart'.

A more complex example was given by Aamer (M, FG5):

Actually, we should seal the Afghanistan border and tell them that no one will cross the border...they [the militants operating in Pakistan] are provided that ammunition by the Afghanistan government. [**Babur:** That US\$1billion per

year was funded to Pakistan through ISI – it was transported to Afghanistan.] And once they seized arms from the Taliban people and what they found was that it was made in India. And, you know, we also should realize the fact that India is working against our interest and helping people it keeps against us.

Aamer said this in the context of increasing terrorist violence within Pakistan. He alluded to Indian support of the militants entering Pakistan from the border with Afghanistan. I know from my personal experience that the discourse of India trying to destabilize Pakistan through various militant organisations, including the Taliban, was quite common when the fieldwork for this study was carried out. Mazari (2009e), a Pakistani academic and writer, criticized the Pakistan government over:

...the questionable manner in which our official institutions declare that there are Indians/US links to militant outfits in Pakistan, but then fail to give details or to take up these issues with the countries concerned. What is the Pakistani state playing at or fearful of? Is it not time the nation was told about the sources of funding and weapons for the militants in specific terms to give credibility to these allegations? Or will all the "militants" be "killed" before we can learn crucial facts about US double dealing and Indian destabilisation of Pakistan. That is why arrest and trial of the militant leadership in anti-terror courts, rather than their killing, is essential for our nation and state's long term security.

The idea of India playing out conflict through destabilization can be understood in the context of the discourse of relational control. According to Yadav and Barwa (2011), relational control is a strategy adopted by a country to maximize its strategic national advantage in a region without directly control and coercion. In many cases, relational control takes the form of development aid, cultural, trade diplomatic initiatives. Yadav and Barwa (2011: 94) state:

The particular objective(s) of relational control may vary but is likely to involve an effort to increase or consolidate the principal's power in relation to the subjects concerned over the long term.

Yadav and Barwa (2011) argue that India and Afghanistan enjoyed close and cordial relations, during the decades following Indian independence. Some of the reasons for a close strategic partnership between the two included their shared experience of

border disputes with Pakistan and their common tilt towards the Soviet Union. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 changed the geopolitical dynamics and placed Pakistan in a remarkably advantageous position because of the US backing for Pakistan's then military government, which supported Islamic militants in Afghanistan in their fight against the Soviet occupation. This made Pakistan the dominant 'player' in Afghanistan. Soon after the fall of the Taliban government, the Indian government enhanced its aid, trade, cultural and diplomatic activities in Afghanistan to reduce its reliance on Pakistan because:

An autonomous Afghanistan is India's best route to maximizing its relational control over Pakistan. The denial of Pakistani hegemony and domination in Afghanistan directly corresponds with stability and security in India. India realizes that if Pakistan were once again able to make Afghanistan into a client regime, it would be able to focus its military on the border with India.

(Yadav and Barwa, 2011: 117)

Adil (M, FG4) alluded to the possible Indian involvement in the then current, unprecedented spate of violence in Pakistan. He said:

...the number of Indian consulates along the Pakistan-Afghan border is beyond belief. There are like six/seven Indian consulates right next to our border to Afghanistan. What I am going to say is that someone could be using Taliban here – could be using Taliban to destabilize Pakistan. It could be India, it could be somebody else.

Adil said in the context of a discussion about the deteriorating law and order situation and the unprecedented rise in terrorist activity in Pakistan. Adil's comments about the enhanced Indian diplomatic activity along the Pakistan-Afghan border relate to India's foreign policy towards Afghanistan in the post-Taliban years, whereby it tried to curtail Pakistan's 'strategic depth in Afghanistan' and increase its 'relational control' over Afghanistan and Pakistan (Yadav and Barwa, 2011: 105). Whereas, much of the violence in Pakistan at the time of this focus group was commonly attributed to the Taliban, Adil claimed that someone else could possibly have been using the Taliban to destabilize Pakistan. Notwithstanding the fact he was careful and remained tentative in his claim, he did mention India as one of the possible forces using the Taliban to destabilize Pakistan.

This section has shown that the participants argued that India was using the post-September 11 geopolitical situation in the region to destabilize and undermine the Pakistani state. I used the discourse of relational control, put forward by Yadav and Barwa (2011), drawing on Chadda, about Indian foreign policy in the region, to analyse the participants' arguments regarding India playing out its conflicts with Pakistan through destabilisation.

7.4 Discussion

In this chapter, I have analysed the research participants' constructions of the Pakistan-India conflicts that have defined the relationship of the two countries ever since they gained independence as two sovereign nation states in 1947.

The participants argued that Pakistan and India were traditional adversaries who were engaged in conflicts ever since they gained independence. They used the discourse of perpetual, mutual hostility between the two countries. They identified four main causes of conflict between the two countries – the geopolitical circumstances in which the two countries came into existence, disputes over water resources, Indian acts of hostility and aggression towards Pakistan, and the repeated failure of peace talks. They talked about the causes of conflicts between the two countries by drawing on various discourses of *jus ad bellum* which included punishing the wrongdoer and taking back what rightfully one's own and war as the last resort. They also drew on the discourse of India's usurpation of Kashmir that is often found in Pakistan Studies textbooks (e.g. Khan, 2004; Rabbani, 2009). One participant challenged the discourse of national self-interest by drawing on the discourse of international legal order. While talking about the causes of conflicts between the two countries, some participants drew on the discourse of Indian hostility and aggression against Pakistan, especially in the context of secession of East Pakistan.

The participants identified three different ways in which the Pakistan-India conflict was played out – conventional wars, terrorism and destabilizing the adversary. They used the example of these conflicts to illustrate the difference between conventional, ethical wars and terrorism. They did this by drawing on various discourses of ethical warfare or *jus in bello*, which included the discourses of preventing harm to civilian non-combatants, collateral damage, and international humanitarian law.

They argued that Kashmir was the main source of conflict between Pakistan and India. They talked about the Kashmir conflict by drawing on the discourse of evolution of conventional warfare into terrorist tactics. They explained this metamorphosis by drawing on the discourses of helplessness of the Kashmiri people and self-defence. They rejected the use of terrorist violence by the Kashmiri freedom fighters by drawing on the discourse of ethical wars being ones that are fought between national armies rather than militant groups, coming out of the wider discourse of national sovereignty discussed in chapter 3.

Finally, some participants suggested that India was involved in the destabilizing Pakistan in the Post-Cold War Episteme. They drew on the discourse of India playing an adversarial role through diplomatic and political activities in Afghanistan in the Post-September 11 period, which related closely to the academic discourse of relational control. They also drew on the discourse of India trying to destabilize Pakistan by supporting various militant organisations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

There are some important similarities and differences between what the participants of my research cited as the just causes of war against India and what the participants in Durrani and Dunne's (2010) research said. Durrani and Dunne (2010) carried out research about schooling and conflict with children attending state schools in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Like the participants of their study, my research participants identified India as the main adversary of Pakistan. However, the participants in Durrani and Dunne's (2010: 228) study constructed Indians as presenting 'an impending external threat to the integrity of Pakistan from the non-Muslim 'other''. Their constructions of India and Pakistan were often in terms of binary opposites – non-Muslim others and Muslim citizens of an Islamic state. The discourse of religion played an important role in these children's constructions of just causes for the resort to violence. However, the participants in my research did not construct Indians as the non-Muslim 'other'. Their references to just causes of resort to use of violence against India were more circumscribed in terms of specific points of contention like its usurpation of Kashmir and the failure of peace talks between the two countries.

There also was a notable difference between the positions adopted by the participants of my research and those who participated in Durrani and Dunne's (2010) study about

militant activity. Durrani and Dunne (2010) did not include any specific analysis of their participants' constructions of conventional warfare and terrorism. However, they mentioned that during one focus group session, a female participant strongly denounced the actions of the Pakistani state against the Taliban militants operating on its soil. She did this because she constructed the Taliban militants as the purported upholders of Islamic ideology. On the other hand, as demonstrated in section 7.3.2, whereas the young people who participated in my research said that they appreciated the reasons for Kashmiris' resort to terrorist tactics, they were unanimous in rejecting such strategies as unacceptable.

The children who participated in Durrani and Dunne's (2010) study were mostly from working class families in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan and attended state schools, which use only textbooks from the official textbook boards that often present religion as 'the chief marker that forms the boundary between Pakistanis and 'others'' (Durrani and Dunne, 2010: 224). On the other hand, the young people who participated in my research were from middle class families and attended private schools. Private schools in Pakistan do not solely use official textbooks; they use books written by independent authors as well, who are not as constrained by government's guidelines as their peers, writing for the official textbook boards. Moreover, since the participants of my research were from middle class backgrounds, they drew on a wider range of discourses about national and international issues as they had access to media like the internet and cable television.

8 Constructions of the September 11 Attacks

In this chapter, I analyse the participants' constructions of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US – who carried them out and why, and the ethics of the conduct of this conflict. In the chapter that follows, I will discuss the participants' constructions of the US response to these and the 'war on terror'.

These attacks were discussed in all six focus groups. The participants put forward various explanations of who carried out the attacks. These explanations fall into two broad categories – those in line with the US government's version of events and those based on various conspiracy theories.

Their arguments about the reasons behind these attacks also depended on their explanations of who carried out the attacks. The participants who articulated an explanation similar to the US government's account said that the people who carried out the attacks had some grievances against the US, which they hoped to avenge through these violent acts. On the other hand, the participants who presented a conspiracy theory and argued that the US itself had engineered these attacks suggested various reasons for doing so, which included US imperial ambitions, which motivated them to take over the Middle East because of its oil reserves, and to discredit Islam.

In box 8.1, I present a time of salient events related to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US.

Box 8.1 – A timeline of salient events related to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, September 11, 2001 attacks.

1979: Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan

1985: Afghan 'Mujahedeen' formed alliance in Pakistan against Soviet occupation.

1986: US Military support for the Afghan Mujahedeen began

1988: Afghanistan, USSR, the US and Pakistan sign peace accord & Soviet forces begin to withdraw

1989: Completion of Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan

1990: The US attacks Iraq for invading Kuwait.

1996: Taliban form government in Kabul.

1997: Recognition of Taliban government by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

1998: US embassies are attacked in Tanzania and Kenya, allegedly by Al-Qaeda operatives.

1998: Missile strikes by the US on Afghanistan for pressuring to hand over Osama bin Laden.

2000: US warship Cole attacked in Yemen, allegedly by Al-Qaeda operatives.

2001: Terrorists attack the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the US.

(adapted and summarised from BBC News, 2013a, 2013b & 2014)

8.1 Who was Behind the Attacks?

In this section, I analyse the participants' constructions of who carried out the September 11 attacks. Three different explanations were put forward and some individuals spoke of more than one of these.

The first explanation suggested that Al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, and supported by the Afghan Taliban, carried out the attacks. This explanation was largely in line with the official US version:

On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country...The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda...This group and its leader, a person named Osama bin Laden, are linked to many other organizations in different countries, including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

(Bush, 2001a: no page number)

For example, Komal (F, FG4) said:

You had Taliban, you had an upcoming terrorist group, breeding in the Arab countries, and who had a very influential leader... So, you had two militant groups – Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. And, you can't say combined, but they had similar views and similar points, they followed similar conservative thinking – narrow thinking. And they channeled all that through the funds, the thinking, the aims and mission and you had 9/11 and other events – other terrorist attacks.

Komal referred to Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban as being behind the attacks. She said the Taliban in the post-USSR Afghanistan and the Al-Qaeda, which had a 'very influential leader', joined hands with the Taliban in Afghanistan to carry out the attacks on the US. Similarly, Adil (M, FG4) said 'I think, it was done by Al-Qaeda.'

Aan (F, FG6) also referred to Osama bin Laden as the main person who planned the attacks. According to her:

...he [Osama bin Laden] went to Afghanistan and hid in some area of Afghanistan – I don't know which place it was. And he said that he is going to wage a war against them [the US]. Then he started collecting people and training them like 'mujahedeen' [holy warriors]. And then the time came when he said I should wage a war against them. So, first he hit the Pentagon, the area with it. And there was a colossal amount of damage taken place. Then they hit the other area of the twin towers – there was a lot of damage. Then he said that he is going to finish the White House also.

Aan argued that the Osama bin Laden, while hiding in Afghanistan, started planning and organising for attacks against the US. Komal's (F, FG4) and Aan's (F, FG6) constructions concur with the version of events put forward by the US government.

The second and a radically different explanation for the September 11 attacks presented by some participants suggested that the US itself was directly responsible. They did this by putting forward various conspiracy theories while talking about who carried out the attacks. In the second focus group, the following discussion took place:

Fahad (M): Do you really think the Muslims really attacked the twin towers?

Fahad (M) & Saima (F): I don't think so.

Saima (F): There was this documentary about 9/11, and, basically, they were telling us that Bush did all this! So that in the future he can use the word terrorism and go and do whatever he wants to.

In this excerpt, Fahad asked a rhetorical question about the 9/11 attacks being carried out by Muslims. He and Saima refuted this possibility; Saima referring to a documentary, said that President Bush himself was responsible for this attack. It seems likely that they were drawing these ideas from the internet documentary – *Loose Change*. This documentary challenged the US government's account of the 9/11 attacks (Butter and Retterath, 2010). The possibility of the participants drawing their

ideas from *Loose Change* is supported by the timeframe of the focus group and the release of the various editions of the film. This focus group took place in September 2006 and the 2nd edition and 2nd edition Recut of *Loose Change* were released in December 2005 and June 2006 respectively. Butter and Retterath (2010: 26) write that 'Loose Change...challenges the official narrative of the events of 11 September 2001 and suggests that forces other than al-Qaida were at work that day.' Each subsequent edition of *Loose Change* aimed to augment this central argument by 'replacing claims from previous editions that had been found insupportable' (2010: 29).

Another participant, Saeed (M, FG4) said:

I think it is part of a long conspiracy...And as a part of this conspiracy, 2001 they did this thing – they did this attack on...And, I am not sure which source, but I read it that 48% US citizens – Americans believe that it was America that did this attack. And internet is filled with documentaries that US did it themselves.

Like Saima (F, FG2), Saeed also referred to internet based documentaries claiming that the US itself had carried out the attacks. By stating that he had read somewhere that a significant percentage of US citizens believed that the US was behind the attacks and by referring to the documentaries, he was presenting his claims as free of personal bias and investment.

Babur (M, FG5) also questioned the official US explanation of who carried out the attacks: 'They haven't provided us with an irrefutable evidence about Al-Qaeda being involved in that incident.' Though Babur did not explicitly say that the US did the attack itself, he argued the evidence of Al-Qaeda's involvement was inadequate. As the discussion progressed, he cast further doubts on the authenticity of the US government's version of events.

Knight (2008: 170) reports that the proposition that the September 11 attacks were 'an inside job' circulated in the public domain through a range of media like websites, books and films:

At one point in 2006 *Loose Change* was the most popular item on Google Video; it has been downloaded more than ten million times to date, bringing 9/11 conspiracy theories to the MTV generation.

The conspiracy theories about September 11 have not been confined to internet-based and non-internet based popular sources. Academic journals have also contributed to burgeoning accounts of who carried out the attacks. For example, Everett (2010: 134) writes:

...evidence suggests the attacks were a "false flag operation," which is a kind of covert operation designed to appear as though it was carried out by some group other than its actual perpetrators. In this case, Arab Muslims have been blamed, when the real culprits were most likely rogue individuals working in the U.S. government and military.

The participants put forward various types of 'evidence' to substantiate their claims about the perpetrators of the attacks. For example, in the following excerpt from focus group 2, the participants supported these claims by arguing that the planes that hit the twin towers were not commercial aircraft as reported by the US government:

Fahad (M): Besides, the planes that attacked, eyewitnesses were telling in the documentary, they were all white, they were plain. They did not have any commercial logo.

Fareeha (F) & Harris (M): Yeah!

Naveed: You mean the ones that hit the buildings?

Fahad (M): Yeah. When they were about to strike the buildings there were some eyewitnesses, who saw the planes, and they were, like, they did not have any commercial logo...

Saima (F): Such as, I mean Emirates or American Airlines.

Fahad (M): Exactly!

Naveed: You mean that the planes that flew from – to America were different planes?

Fareeha (F): They were different planes? Where did all the passengers from those planes go?

Fahad (M): No, no what I am trying to tell is that they were not commercial planes that were hijacked – and that is what is being fed to our minds since 9/11.

Wafa (F): But all those people who died in those planes?

Fahad (M): That is all an embroidered story yar [an Urdu term, the rough equivalent of which in English would be ‘buddy’].

Harris (M): All those people are not real people. Not many people have come to claim the bodies – not many people have come to claim the bodies.

It is likely that the participants were again drawing on *Loose Change*, which cited eyewitness accounts to prove that the aircraft that hit the twin towers were not ordinary, commercial, passenger carriers. Through their articulation of what happened on September 11, 2001, the participants put forward ‘logical’ and ‘credible’ ‘proof’ or ‘evidence’ for their version of the 9/11 attacks. Like the official American explanation of the attacks, the interpretation of the participants in my research served a real function – deflecting the onus of responsibility away from Muslims, to the American establishment itself. This idea that the language which people use serves a specific function rather than transparently representing reality is discussed in chapter 2.

Fareeha and Wafa appeared quite surprised by the assertion made by Fahad. They asked about all the victims in the planes that crashed into the twin towers. Fahad said that it was a fabricated story that was presented by the Bush administration. Wafa’s question is noteworthy because, during this focus group, she often presented alternative perspectives or the ‘other side of picture’ in her arguments, rather than taking one specific position. This tendency could partly be explained by her personal history. She was a US national and was born and had completed the earlier part of school career in that country. Most of her contributions were quite restrained as she presented more nuanced interpretations of events (For example, see her comments on the Kashmir dispute in chapter 5). Her constructions relate to the idea, discussed in chapter 2, that a person’s use of language does not neutrally represent reality, but rather, constructs a specific version of events, drawing on the dominant discourses available to her/him, which form what Shotter (1993: 54), drawing on Vico, refers to as ‘sensus communis’ or a ‘culture’s common sense’.

The participants in focus group 2 presented further evidence for a conspiratorial account by arguing that the manner in which the twin towers collapsed could not have been caused by the aircraft that crashed into them:

Fahad (M): Besides – a plane hits the pinnacle.

Saima (F): They show the films of many buildings on fire – they didn't just collapse, like that.

Harris (M): Some people suggested that there were bombs in different storeys of the building, which were blown after the planes crashed into the building.

Saima (F): The building was made up of some high standard, really high standard steel –

Fahad (M): I was watching at National Geographic how people demolish high-rise buildings. What they do is that they place explosives in the basements, and when these go off then the buildings fall.

Saima (F): And some people who were near the building say that they heard some blasts like a bomb, from the basement.

(FG2)

As in the earlier extracts, the participants presented a counter official, conspiratorial version of how the twin towers came down. Saima was probably drawing on the information presented in *Loose Change*, which showed similar high-rise buildings on fire and, which, she said, did not collapse in the way the twin towers came down. Harris referred to the suggestion that bombs were planted in different floors of the twin towers. Fahad supported this line of argument by referring to a documentary that he watched on National Geographic, which he presented as a source of authentic, unbiased, and scientific explanation of events and phenomena. By presenting their accounts as free of personal interests and beliefs, the participants in the above excerpt used what Wetherell (2001: 21), drawing on Potter, refers to as the strategy of 'stake inoculation'. Thus, by referring to what a film showed, eyewitness accounts and a National Geographic documentary they were presenting their constructions of what happened on September 11 as objective and unbiased.

Harris (M, FG2) provided more evidence to challenge the official US version of attacks:

Even the impact on the Pentagon – the airplanes didn't do that! It was such a great impact – the Pentagon is supposed to be made of steel. And they say that missiles – there is speculation about missiles being launched into the building because the impact was massive. An airplane could not have done that.

Here Harris was supporting and extending what Fahad and Saima said about the September 11 attacks being carried by the US establishment itself. In *Loose Change*, it was claimed that the Pentagon was hit by missiles rather than a passenger aircraft (Butter and Retterath 2010). Commenting on that part of the documentary, Butter and Retterath (2010: 31) write:

...images of buildings hit by cruise missiles are put next to images of the damaged Pentagon in order to imply that it is much more likely that a US-controlled rocket hit the building than a jet hijacked by terrorists.

Participants from focus group 2 put forward further evidence challenging the official US government's version of the attacks:

Fahad (M): The documentary also proves that before 9/11 attacks, America's defence policy was so high, that they were practising, you know, defence measures, planes and everything.

Saima (F): Yeah!

Fareeha (F): It was, it was even there, when initially the thing happened, after a few days, I mean, the way the planes just came at the point it was totally unexpected. Their defence policy is not such that suddenly those planes could have come. [**Fahad:** Yeah] They already knew, they already had an idea about it – their reactions were such.

(FG2)

In this extract, the participants argued that what happened on September 11 was inexplicable given the high level of defence preparedness in the US to counter such emergencies. Commenting on this, Everett (2010: 144-5) writes:

...the failure of the U.S. military to successfully intercept any of the four aircraft targeted on September 11 and prevent them reaching their targets has raised much suspicion. Particular attention has been paid to the actions of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the military organization responsible for monitoring and defending U.S. airspace...In the days after 9/11, it was reported that the two fighters on alert at Otis Air National Guard Base could, when called upon, "be in the air within five minutes." The two fighters on alert at Langley Air Force Base were at the same high state of readiness. As author Lynn Spencer pointed out, the pilots for

those aircraft were "always just five minutes away from rolling out of the hangars in their armed fighters. They live, eat, and sleep just steps from jets." And yet NORAD appears to have performed abysmally on September 11, failing to successfully deal with situations it was more than adequately prepared to handle.

The third explanation of the attacks, put forward by a few participants, suggested that there was an Israeli involvement in the attacks. For example, Komal (F, FG4) said:

Another thing is that the day 9/11 happened, the newspapers printed that around 93,000 Jews were not in the world trade centre – they were on a national holiday – that's what the newspapers said. It's not a coincidence that 93,000 people are not coming to work on one single day.

According to this conspiracy theory, thousands of Jews stayed away from the World Trade Center on the fateful day of September 11, 2001. This claim by Komal (F, FG4) is especially noteworthy because she was one of the very few participants who initially gave an explanation of the attacks that was quite similar to the official US version. Another participant Huma (F, FG6) said:

No one even knew that Osama bin Laden existed. No one knew he was there. It was only after 9/11 that Osama bin Laden was coined...It's propaganda – it's just propaganda...And there was also this – I don't know if it's a rumour or what, but it did happen, there were no Jews in the building when the World Trade Centre collapsed. Why is that? Why was it sabotaged when there were no – when there was not even one Jew in the building?

She challenged the official version of the events and argued that Osama bin Laden was a myth created after the September 11 attacks and questioned why the attacks took place on a day when there were no Jews in the World Trade Center. This conspiracy theory was in common circulation on the internet after the attacks:

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, a rumor circulated on the Internet claimed that 4,000 Jews did not report to work, or "called in sick" that morning. It suggested that no Jews died because they somehow had foreknowledge of the attack. There are several variations of this rumor, including one suggesting that Israel was behind the attacks...These rumors appear to have originated in the Arab world. They are among several conspiracy theories being circulated in the Arab and Muslim

media, as well as on Web sites and bulletin boards, that Israel or the Jews - and not Arab terrorists - were responsible for the attacks on September 11.

(ADL, 2013)

This section has shown some of the participants' constructions of who carried out the September 11 attacks on key US targets. Participants in two focus groups (4 & 6) echoed the US government's official version that the attacks were carried out by Osama bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda network, supported by the Afghan Taliban. These responses were brief and succinct. However, some participants in four focus groups (2, 4, 5 & 6) articulated various conspiracy theories about the attacks. They spoke in greater detail and at more length. This appeared to be because they found talking about conspiracies more interesting and stimulating. While articulating the conspiracy theories, they presented evidence, in many cases, probably drawn from *Loose Change*, to substantiate their claims. The participants used various strategies like 'stake inoculation' (Potter cited in Wetherell 2001: 21) to make their constructions appear unbiased and objective.

8.2 The Reasons for the September 11 Attacks

In this section, I discuss what the participants said about the reasons that motivated people who carried out the September 11 attacks. As discussed in the previous section, the participants' explanations of who carried out the attacks fell into two main categories – one similar to the US government's account and another based on various conspiracy theories, suggesting that the US carried out the attacks itself. Similarly, while talking about the reasons that motivated the people who did these attacks, some participants identified factors as if the attacks were perpetrated by Al-Qaeda operatives and some of them proposed considerations as if the US government itself was behind the attacks. I analyse each of these sets of reasons in turn.

As discussed in the previous section, Komal (F, FG4) argued that Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban were behind the September 11 attacks, and she also articulated their possible motivations:

You could have Afghanistan, you could have other Arab countries who had their differences with the Western world. So, these militant groups take these groups take these differences personally and make it their aim to – if the

government is not fighting for the wrong that the West is doing, they make it their aim to do it themselves – and they do it by hook or by crook.

Thus, Komal suggested that the militant groups which carried out these attacks wanted to avenge the ‘wrongs’, about which the governments of their respective countries had not been willing to take any action. Thus, according to Komal, the main reason for the 9/11 attacks was the sense of being wronged felt by those people, who hailed from Afghanistan and some Middle Eastern countries. The idea that the 9/11 attacks were a form of ‘revenge’ was also supported by Adil (M, FG4):

It was basically their kind of revenge. They wanted America’s cultural imperialism that goes on around the world and we all know it is the only super power for the past so many years. It was kind of grudge they had after the Russian war in Afghanistan – it was totally destroyed...

Adil attributed the reasons that led to the 9/11 attacks to ‘America’s cultural imperialism’ that went unchecked because of its status as the world’s lone superpower. He argued that the reason for the September 11 attacks related to the US policies in Afghanistan, especially in the wake of the Soviet invasion of the country in 1979, and the destruction these had caused.

Saeed (M, FG4) also referred to the US policies in Afghanistan while talking about the reasons for the September 11 attacks: ‘...the USA fed these Taliban during that Russian War and they invested on the Taliban, made them extremists.’ Similarly, Fareeha (F, FG2) argued:

America itself is responsible for this attack, even if we say that Al-Qaeda did these – who was the one who created them?! If America hadn’t done the stupidity of bringing all of these people of different nations and just *throwing* them in Afghanistan, after using them, they wouldn’t have faced this problem!

Another participant, Komal (F, FG4) said:

It probably started as after, post Afghanistan and Russian war. You had Taliban, you had an upcoming terrorist group, breeding in the Arab countries, and who had a very influential leader [Osama bin Laden], and they had the specific aim of destabilizing the West.

Thus, Komal also pointed to the Russian War in Afghanistan as the precursor of various acts of terrorism, including the September 11 attacks.

Commenting on the US policies in Afghanistan and how these led to the circumstances which precipitated the September 11 attacks, Paul (2010: 15-16) writes:

America's new friends...were the Islamic guerrillas known as *mujahedeen*, or "holy warriors", battling the Soviets. In 1986, the US and its allies began arming the mujahedeen...By the late 1980s, the mujahedeen had battled the mighty Red Army to a stalemate...The war had taken a terrible toll on both sides...Back in Afghanistan, chaos reigned...From this anarchy emerged the Taliban...Other mujahedeen leaders joined forces with the Taliban, including...Osama bin Laden...After being expelled from Saudi Arabia for his anti-government activities, he was welcomed back to Afghanistan by the Taliban. Working with a growing group of other angry Islamic fundamentalists who became known as Al Qaeda, bin Laden began plotting against the U.S. and the West...[culminating in the] attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001...

When I carried out the fieldwork for my research, the discourse of US policies being one of the factors that precipitated the September 11 attacks was common in Pakistan. Saleem (2001: 6) in an article published in the most widely circulated English newspaper of Pakistan, *The News*, wrote:

In 1985, Reagan had invited a group of bearded Afghan *mujahideen* to the White House. Reagan introduced them to everyone as the "moral equivalent of America's founding fathers". Back then, the *mujahideen* were pals with the Americans fighting Reagan's 'evil empire'.

Like various participants in my research, Saleem (2001) argued that during the 1980s the 'mujahideen', the forerunners of the Taliban, were close allies of the US, when its prime objective was to fight the communist threat posed by the USSR. However, once the Soviet forces withdrew and a civil war erupted in Afghanistan, the Taliban emerged as a potent force in the country. Around the same time, Osama bin Laden was expelled by the Saudi government, and, on finding convenient allies in the Afghan Taliban, he shifted to that country and started planning attacks on Western targets, especially those belonging to the US.

Some participants, especially those who posited a conspiracy theory regarding the perpetrators, argued that the US had either carried out these attacks themselves or orchestrated these for ulterior reasons. For example, Saira (F, FG5) argued:

I think it was done for oil – all the oil that Iraq has. It's still not – it's an irony that it's still not a very rich country. What the Americans wanted to do though was that they wanted to take over all the oil. So that, I mean, they didn't have to pay for the all the oil, so took over all the region.

Saira said this in response to a question about the reasons for the September 11 attacks. She argued that these were carried out by the US itself to provide a valid reason for taking control of the oil in Iraq.

Tabish (M, FG5) gave another reason for the US carrying out the September 11 attacks:

I feel that in the years before all this 9/11 incident America had developed itself quite good economically and otherwise. And now they felt that it was their time to dominate the world. So, it was, umm, umm, properly planned incident to start this spread all over the world and to influence the world with their thoughts and force themselves on others.

Tabish was arguing that the September 11 attacks were planned by the US to extend its hegemony over the world. US imperial ambition, which it was argued by some of the participants, had motivated the US to carry out the attacks on itself, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Some participants in focus group five articulated a different reason for the US carrying out the September 11 attacks – to discredit Islam and Muslims. They argued that Islam was the fastest growing religion in the world and the US wanted to stop this trend. This desire of the US establishment made it orchestrate the September 11 attacks:

Babur (M): To destroy the image of Islam. And, umm, to provide a reason to the Americans to occupy the region – to attack Afghanistan. It was basically – they were framed – they wanted the region, they attacked it.

Tabish (M): ...In fact, I feel that it is part of that religious, umm, umm, clash of religions. And it has been a little bit modified, in fact, given a different angle to the world – represented to the world as a war on terror. But I feel it is something created by itself and to dominate – that's all!

Aamer (M): ... Islam was growing very fast, on a very rapid scale.

Saira (F): It's still growing very fast.

Aamer (M): They thought they could stop it – they thought that they could stop it.

Saira (F): More people are converting to Islam than ever before.

Aamer (M): Yes, they are – but they didn't realize that at that time. What they thought was that if they portray Islam as a religion of hatred and extremism, they would actually stop the growth of Islam in America.

Tabish (M): ...Their main objective was to disintegrate the image of Islam, and that they are successful in. When we say we're Muslims – we have a beard, we have cap on our head – we're recognized as – we might be a terrorist – put him aside then we'll have a look at him. And they are successful in the way they wanted to do it.

(FG5)

The participants were responding to a question about why the September 11 attacks were carried out. They argued that discrediting Islam was the main aim that motivated these attacks, which they went on to argue were engineered by the US establishment itself. The discourse of the US trying to discredit Islam was a strong one in Pakistan in the years following the September 11 attacks. According to this discourse, the September 11 attacks were executed by the US establishment to discredit Islam, which it saw as a threat, especially in the post-Cold War era.

In this section, I analysed the participants' articulations of the reasons that motivated the people who carried out the September 11 attacks. The reasons that the participants cited depended on their explanations of who carried out the attacks. Those who argued that Al-Qaeda, supported by the Afghan Taliban, carried out the attacks maintained that these done to retaliate against the West, especially the US. On the other hand, the participants who argued that the US carried out these attacks itself suggested two sets of reasons – American imperial ambition and the aim of discrediting Islam. These are discussed in detail in the next chapter, in relation to the US response.

8.3 The Participants' Constructions of the September 11 Terrorist Attacks

In this section, I briefly discuss the participants' constructions of the conduct of 9/11 terrorist violence. Participants in three focus groups (2, 3 and 4) talked about terrorist violence. For example, in focus group four the following exchange took place:

Adil (M): I think it was done by Al-Qaeda but the reasons were just not justified...I think it was sort of a revenge but totally unjustified.

Naveed: Totally unjustified?

Adil: Yes.

Zoya: I would say the same, definitely – not justified, even if, I mean, umm, whatever the Western world does to you, you have no right to go and kill so many innocent citizens, just for no reason at all. I mean, for personal revenge, even if, umm, the US comes and kills 3000 of your people, it is not justified to go and kill tens of thousands of theirs in such a senseless act of –

(FG4)

Both Adil and Zoya denounced the September 11 attacks as ‘totally unjustified’. Similarly, in focus group two, some participants rejected the September 11 terrorist attacks:

Fareeha (F): ...actually there are some norms in life, like, which you have to follow – if everybody starts acting on what we feel, and how we feel, then, this world won’t exist. There are some norms of life, some set rules written which we have to follow, in one condition or the other.

Harris M): It is not your fault that you’re born in a particular country.

Fareeha (F): Exactly! It’s not your fault that you are born in America –

Fareeha and Harris were speaking in the context of September 11 attacks and they rejected whatever motives the people who were responsible for these might have had.

Some participants in focus group three expressed concern about identifying terrorism with Muslims, especially in the wake of the September 11 attacks, For example Malihah (F, FG3) said:

A terrorist is not – he belongs to no religion. Because no religion allows terrorism, no religion allows such hate with people, no religion allows suicide bombing – no religion says that it is fine – not Islam, not Hinduism, not Christianity, not Jewish – none of them say that it’s right...*And* the other thing is that a terrorist – a terrorist can be anyone. I can be a terrorist, you can be a terrorist, anyone can be a terrorist, but that does not mean that every Muslim is a terrorist or every Christian is a terrorist just because one Christian did something wrong – that does not make the whole community wrong...So,

saying that all Muslims are terrorist or all Christians are bad – even us as Muslims, if we say that all Hindus are bad or all Christians are bad that's wrong! Because even our religion says do not criticize anyone else – look at yourself and then blame other people.

Building on this, Malihah suggested that the terrorist 'belongs to no religion' as no religion 'allows such hate with people'. She maintained that a terrorist could be anyone and suggested that linking terrorist violence with a specific faith was wrong.

Thus, the participants quoted in this section, notwithstanding the motivations for and circumstances of terrorist violence rejected it as being unjustified and unacceptable.

8.4 Summary

In this chapter, I analysed the participants' constructions of the September 11 attacks – who carried these out and why. While some participants said that the attacks were carried out by Al-Qaeda operatives, led by Osama bin Laden, and supported by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, many presented conspiracy theories arguing that the US itself had engineered the attacks. Those who suggested conspiracy theories spoke in much greater detail. It appeared that in constructing their explanations they drew on various documentaries available on the internet, most notably *Loose Change*.

The participants who suggested that the US itself had engineered the attacks articulated various reasons which included US imperial ambitions and the aim of discrediting Islam. Thus, the constructions of the participants of my research of September 11 attacks were varied. Whereas some suggested explanations regarding the perpetrators of and the reasons for the attacks that were similar to the official US government's version of events, others presented counter-narratives, based on various conspiracy theories.

I also briefly analysed some of the participants' constructions of the conduct of terrorism. Notwithstanding the motivations for and the circumstances of terrorist violence, they denounced it as being unjustified and unacceptable. Some participants suggested that linking terrorism with a specific religious faith was wrong. They argued that stereotyping the followers of a religion as being bad was unhelpful.

9 The War on Terror

In this chapter, I analyse the participants' constructions of the 'war on terror'. In all six focus groups, the 'war on terror' was discussed. The participants talked about the causes as well as the conduct of this war led by the US. I discuss each of these in turn.

Box 9.1 outlines some of the salient events related to the US led 'war on terror'.

Box 9.1 – A timeline of salient events related to the US led 'war on terror'

2001: Terrorists attack the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the US.

2001: Following September 11 attacks, the US attacks Afghanistan to topple the Taliban government. Pakistan's military government joins the US led 'war on terror.'

2002: President Bush & Prime Minister Blair announce that Iraq poses a serious risk.

2002: UN weapons inspectors start work in Iraq.

2003: Hans Blix asks for more time for his team to complete its task.

2003: The US led 'coalition of the willing' attack Iraq without a UN mandate.

2004: The US begins drone strikes in the tribal areas of Pakistan, targeting Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants.

(adapted and summarised from BBC News, 2013a, 2013b & 2014)

9.1 The Causes and Justifications of the War on Terror

In this section, I analyse the participants' constructions of the causes of the US led 'war on terror' – the reasons for which it was initiated. I use the term 'justification' to refer to the reasons that the US put forward for starting the 'war on terror'. I use the term 'causes' in a more general sense, including the underlying motives that the participants of my research attributed to the US for initiating the 'war on terror'. The participants were often very critical of the justifications of the 'war on terror' put forward by the US government. They talked about the justifications for the war and critiqued these and they also suggested underlying causes for it, based on ulterior motives of the US establishment. I discuss each of these sets of causes of the 'war on terror' in turn. I begin by discussing the participants' references to the justifications for the 'war on terror', which the US government put forward. Next, I outline and analyse the underlying ulterior causes for the 'war on terror' mentioned by the research

participants. In each section, I identify the relevant discourses that the participants drew upon.

9.1.1 Justifications of the 'War on Terror' Put Forward by the US Government

Some participants made references to the justifications of 'war on terror' put forward by the US government. Discourses used by President Bush and his team to justify the 'war on terror' are discussed in chapter 3. Adil (M, FG4) argued that the US started this war in self-defence and retaliation:

I think they panicked because they had reason to panic as well because if they did not do anything about it, they probably would have skinned them alive...I think they had no option really. I mean, just imagine that they had not attacked Afghanistan or Iraq. Right now Saddam Hussain in Iraq and Taliban in Afghanistan – we all know that Taliban right now, even after all the losses that they suffered they are so strong that they are basically the pain in the neck of two governments. The Pakistani government is so [inaudible] and they still can't tackle them. And in the south Afghanistan – it belongs to them – so, I think it's a war that could have been better planned, it could have been better executed, but it was a war that was inevitable, especially the Afghanistan war. But, I think, the Iraq war it could have been – there could have been other ways to do that – the regime change – Saddam Hussain – it could have been done in a very better and a very peaceful way.

Adil (M, FG4) argued that the US had to attack Afghanistan and Iraq because they were under dire threat from the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks. He was drawing on the discourse of self-defence as a just cause of war, which is discussed in chapter 3. However, he distinguished between invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. He argued the US had 'no option' but to attack Afghanistan, which made it a just war. However, he maintained that there were alternatives to the Iraq war; the objectives behind Iraq's invasion could have been achieved through peaceful means. By arguing 'there could have been other ways to do that', he was drawing on the discourse of war as the last resort as a just cause of war. And, since, according to him, in the case of Iraq, invasion was not the last resort, it was not a just war.

Komal (F, FG4) said that the US launched the 'war on terror' against militant groups like Al-Qaeda and the Taliban who posed a grave danger to the West because:

...they [terrorists] have no limits – terrorism has no boundaries, it has no limits, it has no borders. So, there are people – the militant group is breeding in the Arab world, and they attack the Western World. You can see how influential and widespread they are, and how operational they are. They were able to conduct the second attack and successfully.

She argued that the terrorists behind the September 11 attacks were highly effective and active and the September 11 attacks were a testimony to the danger they posed to the 'Western World'. In making this argument, Komal was drawing on the discourse of terrorism, discussed in chapter 3. Similarly, as discussed in chapter 8, Aan (F, FG6) also mentioned the grave threat posed to the US by Osama bin Laden who wanted to 'finish [even] the White House' – the official residence and headquarters of US presidents.

Thus, Adil, Komal and Aan all referred to the grave risk the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 presented to the West, especially the US – one of the key justifications put forward by the US government for its 'war on terror'. This existential threat confronting the US was used by President Bush and his close team to draw on the discourse of supreme emergency discussed in chapter 3. By equating the terrorists behind the September 11 attacks to the Nazis and fascists, President Bush (2001a) constructed the threat posed by them as constituting a supreme emergency. He and his aides used this discourse to present the 'war on terror' and the violations of international law that it entailed as justified and acceptable.

Saira (F, FG5) criticised the 'war on terror' because the US did not have any 'proper proof':

It was unjust. Even the people of America didn't find it to be just. There were protests then in front of the White House. Even if the people of America feel that this is wrong – it has to be wrong! We also think that it is wrong. It was wrong. Because, you just can't go on without any proper proof – without even proving anything – you can't just go on and just attack a country. You are entering their boundaries – how can you do that?!

Saira argued that since the US lacked proof, its actions could not be justified. She criticized the 'war on terror' by drawing on the discourse of national sovereignty.

According to her, violating other countries' national sovereignty, without adequate proof, made the war unjust.

The US in the post-September 11 years unilaterally redefined the discourse of national sovereignty. For example, Richard Haass, Director of Policy Planning for the State Department, during President Bush's tenure as President said:

What you're seeing from this Administration is the emergence of a new principle or body of ideas...about what you might call the limits of sovereignty. Sovereignty entails obligations. One is not to massacre your own people. Another is not to support terrorism in any way. If a government fails to meet these obligations, then it forfeits some of the normal advantages of sovereignty, including the right to be left alone inside your own territory. Other governments, including the United States, gain the right to intervene. In the case of terrorism, this can even lead to a right of preventive, or peremptory, self-defense. You essentially can act in anticipation if you have grounds to think it's a question of when, and not if, you're going to be attacked.

(Haass as cited in Lemann, 2002: no page no.)

Thus, any state which was considered to have supported terrorism (as was said to be the case for Afghanistan) was seen as having lost its right to sovereignty. This discourse implied that the US invasion of Afghanistan was legitimate, and would invalidate Saira's argument above.

Similarly, Acharya (2007) argues that the US establishment used the discourse of humanitarian intervention, which gained prominence with the publication of the influential report *The Responsibility to Protect* by The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001), to redefine the discourse of Westphalian sovereignty. However, he argues that the discourse of humanitarian intervention as articulated in this report:

...would justify intervention, even that aimed at preventing large-scale loss of life and ethnic cleansing and undertaken through a legitimate multilateral framework, only as an 'extreme', 'extraordinary' and 'exceptional' measure. Yet few members of the international community would agree that Iraq necessitated such a response, especially when the evidence of its weapons of

mass destruction programme and links with al-Qa'eda had not been conclusive.

(2007: 290)

In focus group six, the participants argued that the US, before invading other countries, should have investigated the matter further:

Natasha (F): They overreacted. Basically, they should have calmed down – they should have investigated it more.

...

Mysha (F): But listen, the only thing that they did was straight away blame Osama bin Laden – they didn't investigate it.

Natasha (F): Like whatever happened five days ago, the Indian bombings, straightaway the Indians blamed Pakistan. They didn't investigate it further. Exactly the same way, the Americans, when this happened, blamed Osama bin Laden. Nobody knew Osama bin Laden before that – who's Osama bin Laden?

...

Huma (F): Blaming Muslims is just a way of eradicating out of the world – it is not possible. If being a Muslim means being a terrorist then fine, we're happy being terrorists! [others join in too] But the point is that all Muslims aren't terrorists and not all Americans are against other –

Natasha (F): Maybe because of this, maybe because of this, because if you, for example if, if I bully someone so much that they go out of their mind, they will attack me, they will come against me because this is human nature

Huma (F): Retaliation.

Natasha (F): Retaliation exactly. So, America – if America is blaming Afghanistan for everything that has happened and going to war with them, even though America knows that Afghanistan isn't a big country and it can't really defend itself – and it isn't – and it's taking over it, so obviously the Taliban, whoever they are, even if they were in Afghanistan, they will obviously, they will retaliate, they will attack –

(FG6)

These participants argued that the US acted too hastily in apportioning the blame for the September 11 attacks. They should not have reacted the way they did and should

have investigated the matter further. They argued that almost as a reflex reaction the US government blamed Osama bin Laden as the one who masterminded the attacks. Natasha (F, FG6) argued that the US blaming Afghanistan pushed the Taliban against the wall and left no option for them except retaliation. By suggesting that Afghanistan could not 'defend itself', Natasha was drawing on the discourse of hierarchy of nation states. Not only did she question the justness of the Afghan war but she also implied that any retaliatory action by the Taliban in the future would classify as self-defence because bullying makes people 'go out of their mind[s]'.

This point has also been made by some academics, criticizing the US led 'war on terror'. For example, Baker (2007a: 23), an American professor of international politics, argues that 'American imperial assertions' have wreaked havoc and fear on countless people in the Islamic world including Afghanistan and Iraq. And these unprecedented acts of violence on part of the US have given rise to new forms of resistance in the world.

Some participants criticised the 'war on terror' by drawing on the discourse of international legal order, discussed in chapter 3. For example, Ahmer (M, FG1) said:

Well, I think, what America did was unjustified. They went against the United Nations laws. They couldn't invade a country without getting it approved by United Nations. They went against that.

Ahmer said this in response to a question about the invasion of Iraq by the US and its allies. Drawing on the discourse of international legal order, he argued that invasion of Iraq by the US was 'unjustified'. He was also drawing on the discourse of legitimate authority because he suggested that a country on its own could not attack another country; in order to do so, it needed a mandate from United Nations. Another participant, Asma (F, FG1) argued:

...if America attacks Iraq, or if any country goes into another country, invades their country, they are exploiting somebody else's right, a right that they themselves do have...Since America is powerful, it's strong, it has the freedom, it has freedom of action, it should recognise that right in other countries as well. And in that trajectory, it was wrong for them to attack Iraq, because if they are free, then they should accept other countries' freedom to act.

Asma criticised the US invasion of Iraq because doing so violated the latter's rights. Though she did not explicitly refer to the UN or any other supranational organisation,

she was drawing on the discourse of international legal order that conferred the right to protection from external aggression on every country. Maher (M, FG1) too criticised the US led 'war on terror' by drawing on the discourse of international legal order:

...I think when you're living, when you're functioning in an international community, when you want peaceful coexistence to take, to take physical form in our world, you – the idea of the survival of the fittest, actually, is not in conjunction with what, what in this world we have. In this world we have laws. And, I think United States of America under those laws, looking at those laws, where she is not infringing the right of freedom of other people – it didn't have the right – and it destroyed the right, and it destroyed the laws of the – international laws of humanity and of, of community, of nationhood...You cannot rationalize wars like that, the way America is doing. Ultimately it will create a scenario where they will have a world war III, which is, would be obvious, inevitable, where we would use nuclear weapons, and we will have a fourth world war with sticks and stones.

He also referred to the US' assertion that Iraq had a stock of weapons of mass destruction, which justified attacking it:

Now considering Iraq as a separate example, where they said they are going to go in and find weapons of mass destruction. Where, when we even have United Nations weapons inspections team in Iraq, where Iraq's regime and government was agreeing to let them work - it's, it's illegal basically. And, I think, when you, when you start saying that you can rationalize it morally, you get into destroying the system of law that we have in this world.

He criticised the invasion of Iraq because the UN weapons inspection team was at that time still in Iraq. He argued that the invasion was illegal because the weapons inspection team of the United Nations was working in the country and the Iraqi government was cooperating with them. Maher's comments echo Fisher's (2011: 690) argument:

UNSCR Resolution 1441, passed on 9 November 2002, while declaring Iraq in material breach of its disarmament obligations, had given Saddam a final chance to prove otherwise. The UNMOVIC [United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission] inspectors had arrived in Iraq only on 28 November 2002 and had not yet had time to complete their work. In their

7 March report they had begun to report a greater degree of Iraqi cooperation. Many felt that the inspectors should have been given more time.

On January 29, 2003 Hans Blix (2003), the chief of the UN weapons inspections team gave an upbeat assessment of the enhanced capabilities of his team and the prospects of its work in Iraq. He said that the UNMOVIC team had 'built up its capabilities in Iraq', which were 'at the disposal of the Security Council' (2003: 270). Thus, the decision on part of the US and the UK governments to invade Iraq at a time when the UNMOVIC team under Hans Blix was in Iraq, under a mandate from the United Nations, was seen by many people, including some of the participants in this study, as contravening the international legal order and as not taken by the legitimate authority, the locus of which, as discussed in chapter 3, is the Security Council.

Maher (M, FG1) referred to another justification put forward by the US government for attacking Iraq in 2003 – liberating the Iraqi people from a dictator and introducing democracy. However, he suggested that this justification was conjured up later on to deflect public attention from the embarrassment caused by there being no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq:

It's very obvious. I mean, come on, you have to answer your own public – the American public, which, which the President goes on television, tells that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. It's a monster, it's going to come up and attack us tomorrow. Three months after ousting Saddam Hussain, you have no weapons of mass destruction. The President comes up again, and says Saddam Hussain was a tyrant, he was, he was torturing Iraqi nationals, so, we ousted him. Then again coming up, and finally what we see recently is the idea of Greater Middle East, where they are going to inculcate democracy, establish democracy.

Thus, Maher was highly critical of the US government's discourse of liberating the Iraqi people and introducing democracy in Iraq as a justification for attacking it. He suggested that on finding no weapons of mass destruction, the justification of liberating Iraqi people and transforming Iraq into a democratic polity were presented to the world.

Like Maher, Haniya (F, FG1) also alluded to the justification of liberating the Iraqi people put forward by the US:

...we can never justify the interference of some other country into the politics of some other country. Because, it's their own political system, the way it's working. Its, it's the job of the people to rebel against Saddam, not America's job. The people can take care of their politics themselves. For example if umm if George W Bush he comes here, and he starts saying that okay, Pervez Musharraf isn't doing this right, we're going to fight your case and stuff. It's us who have to take a stand against Musharraf and not American people.

Haniya argued that the justification based on the objective of liberating the Iraqi people from the tyranny and oppression of Saddam Hussein was not a valid one because it was the 'job of the [Iraqi] people to rebel against Saddam'. In constructing this argument she was drawing on the discourse of national sovereignty. In denouncing US intervention, she also drew on the discourse of legitimate authority, discussed in chapter 3. Similarly, Natasha (F, FG6) also referred to the justifications of liberating the people of Afghanistan and Iraq from oppressive regimes put forward by the US for its 'war on terror':

But that's their country – they can do whatever they want in their country. They're not forcing niqabs [veils] or forcing jubas [long, loose gown worn by conservative Muslim women] in America – they're not doing that! They are doing it in their own country. There's freedom, exactly, there's freedom for everyone in their own country. And if they are doing it in their own country, fine! American didn't have a right to go and attack Afghanistan or Iraq or Pakistan's Tribal Areas.

Natasha argued that what people did 'in their own country' did not give the US 'a right to go and attack Afghanistan or Iraq or Pakistan's Tribal Areas'. In criticising US invasion of other countries, as part of its 'war on terror', like Haniya (F, FG1) before her, she was drawing on the discourses of national sovereignty and international legal order. The US led 'war on terror' has often been criticised by people, drawing on these discourses. For example, Natarajan (2011: 802), a professor of International Law at the American University in Cairo, writes:

When debating the merits of the Coalition's case, most international lawyers argued over issues of interpretation and *jus ad bellum*. On a deeper level, however, they were arguing about the territorial and political sovereignty of Iraq. Coalition action was not confined to enforcing ceasefire conditions by

searching for and disarming alleged weapons of mass destruction. The Coalition went much further by instituting regime change, undertaking long-term occupation and nation-building, and overseeing a transition to democracy. Therefore, the Coalition's argument raises questions not only about SC [Security Council] authorization, but also about principles of sovereign equality and non-intervention that are traditionally regarded as foundational norms of the international legal system.

Thus, the US led war on terror has often been criticised by people, including some of the participants of my study, by drawing on the discourse of national sovereignty. Both Haniya (F, FG1) and Natasha (F, FG1), quoted above, drawing on the discourses of national sovereignty and international legal order rejected the US justification for invading Afghanistan and Iraq based on the ideal of emancipating the people of these countries from oppressive regimes.

In focus group one, the participants engaged in a complex discussion about the justification of the Iraq war. They talked about the meaning of sovereignty, legitimate authority and the difference and, at times, the tension between national and international law:

Maher (M): ...when you destroy the system of law that we currently live under in this world, we are going to create wars, more bloodshed...That's what United States of America did, that's what Saddam Hussain did.

Salma (F): Umm, umm, no, no that is not what happened [Maher: Domestically –]. But, that's internal affairs of the country. International law and internal affairs are different.

Amin (M): But the point is that the people are still suffering, because somebody [Saddam Hussein] broke the law. How do you deal with that?

Salma (F): Okay, listen. If for example, it's your family and my family, and my mother disapproves of your brother, no, no, my mother disapproves of kids staying up till three at night. Your brother stays up till three in the night, she doesn't like that. But she doesn't have the right to tell your brother not to do that, because, that's where your family's freedom comes in, that's where your parents' freedom comes in. So, as my mother's freedom to tell anybody to do anything is restricted to her family –

Amin (M): But, that's different. Your mother is an accepted form of authority – Saddam Hussain was a dictator, he was not an accepted form of authority

Salma (F): But, see –

Maher (M): You are once again drawing an incorrect parallel. You are talking of United States of America attacking Iraq – one country attacking another country. And now you are saying that Saddam Hussain inside his domestic – they are two different scenarios –

Amin (M): I am basically building upon the argument of war, where you said that, umm, United States broke the law. I said no, Saddam Hussain broke the international laws first.

Maher (M) & Salma (F): And how do you know that?

Amin (M): Well, okay, the internal laws, which I heard –

Maher (M): There is a difference in –

Salma (F): He has the right inside his territory –

Amin (M): He has the right to break the internal laws?

Maher (M): No, he didn't have the right, but you are talking of different laws. One international laws, two, domestic laws. I think Iraq had its own domestic laws. Whatever Saddam Hussain was doing, we all agree it was wrong...The means that were adopted [to remove Saddam Hussein] were illegal. When we adopt illegal means, we are setting a precedent, and premise for other nations to do it as well. I think that the means were illegal...

(FG1)

I have included a detailed excerpt from the focus group to capture the complexity and nuances of the discussion that took place. Maher began by arguing that the US and Saddam Hussain both broke international law. He, in fact, equated the US actions to those of Saddam Hussain. Maher's remarks sparked a complex discussion about the legitimacy of the US actions. Salma used the analogy of a family to support her claim about the problematic nature of US intervention in Iraq. She argued that her mother could not impose her will in Amin's house because her authority was 'restricted to her family'. By presenting this analogy she was drawing on the discourses of legitimate authority and national sovereignty. Amin challenged Salma's analogy by stating that her mother was an 'accepted form of authority', whereas Saddam was not so because

he 'was a dictator'. In constructing this argument he was drawing on the discourse of legitimate authority. Maher added another dimension to the debate by arguing that breaking internal laws (e.g. what Saddam had done), did not justify contravening international law (e.g. what the US did by attacking Iraq). Salma, Amin and Maher in the above excerpt drew on the discourses of international legal order, national sovereignty, and legitimate authority discussed in chapter 3.

Amin argued that Saddam Hussein 'was a dictator' and, hence, did not constitute legitimate authority. Amin's argument resonated with the discourse of responsibility to protect innocent citizens from the tyranny of an oppressive regime. As discussed in chapter 3, this discourse, predicated on the earlier discourse of protecting the innocent, gained prominence with the publication of the report *The Responsibility to Protect* by The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001).

The report states:

What has been gradually emerging is a parallel transition from a culture of sovereign impunity to a culture of national and international accountability. International organizations, civil society activists and NGOs use the international human rights norms and instruments as the concrete point of reference against which to judge state conduct.

(2.18, 14: 2001)

Maher maintained, notwithstanding the misconduct of Saddam Hussein within his own country, the US had acted illegally by attacking Iraq. Acharya (2007: 289) argues that the report *Responsibility to Protect* (2001) could not be used to legitimise the US led invasion of Iraq because in the report:

The UN is designated as the most appropriate authority, the chief 'applicator of legitimacy' in humanitarian interventions. While acknowledging its limitations and imperfections, the Report leaves 'absolutely no doubt' that the Security Council remains the best place for authorising humanitarian intervention. The task of the Report is not to seek alternatives to the Council, but to make that mechanism work better. The Report mandates Council approval in all cases of intervention while urging it to act promptly to such requests.

The participants in the above extract referred to the justification put forward by the US government for invading Iraq in 2003 (i.e. removing a tyrannical and oppressive regime). Whereas, Amin, echoing the discourse of responsibility to protect, justified the US invasion because Saddam was a dictator and, hence, did not constitute legitimate authority who could claim sovereign immunity, Salma and Maher challenged this position by drawing on the discourses of international legal order, national sovereignty, and legitimate authority.

9.1.2 The Underlying Causes of the War on Terror

In this section, I analyse the participants' constructions of the underlying, ulterior causes of the US led 'war on terror'.

Many participants in five out of six focus groups (focus groups, 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6) cited American imperial ambitions as the main underlying cause of the 'war on terror'. Imperialism can take many forms – economic, military, geopolitical hegemony, and colonisation etc. Some of participants argued that the US had embarked on the 'war on terror' to realise its imperial ambitions, especially to get control of the oil reserves in the Middle East. For example, Ahmer (M, FG1) said:

...the fact is that they made a phoney case, for no reason at all. What they aimed – What I think, they aimed for is to secure, umm, raw material and resources. That's what they aimed to do. As oil – oil is very – the price of oil keeps on increasing, and Iraq constitutes to a large – very large – portion –

Drawing on the discourse of American imperialism, Ahmer argued that the US had made 'a phoney case' for invading Iraq because its real motive was to secure control of the rich oil reserves of the country.

Another participant, Fareeha (F, FG2) also drawing on the discourse of American imperialism, mentioned oil as an ulterior motive behind the US actions in Afghanistan and Iraq:

Which were the areas Americans basically attacked? What happened after attacking Afghanistan? All the American oil companies, including Bush's own company, come there and take all the contracts on a very low price! Why did that happen? And then Iraq, again an oil-rich country – what happened in Iraq? Why was Iraq pulled in?

Drawing on the discourse of American imperialism, Fareeha argued that the invasions of Afghanistan as well as Iraq were driven by the US ambition to control oil resources in the Middle East. Her assertion drew on criticisms of the US led 'war on terror' which were quite common at the time when the fieldwork for this research was carried out. These criticisms were based on allegations pertaining to the corporate interests of the US companies in Afghanistan and the US' strategic objective of controlling the vast oil reserves of the Middle East. For example, Billon and Khatib (2004: 120) outline the case of a California based company UNOCAL which, after the ouster of the Taliban, was named by the then newly installed Afghan government as the main company to execute the project of laying a pipeline from the Turkmenistan gas fields, through Afghanistan, to Pakistan.

Saira (F, FG5) also cited oil as one of the motives behind the US invasion of Iraq:

I think it was done for oil – all the oil that Iraq has. It's still not – it's an irony that it's still not a very rich country. What the Americans wanted to do though was that they wanted to take over all the oil, so that, I mean, they didn't have to pay for all the oil, so they took over all the region. That shows American superiority throughout the world – they still want to remain a superpower.

Saira not only cited access to Iraq's oil as the US' underlying motive but she also linked this to the country's desire to retain its status as a world superpower. In making these assertions, she too was drawing on the discourse of American imperialism.

Some participants in focus group six also mentioned both oil and power as the underlying causes for the US led 'war on terror':

Mysha (F): The main mission I believe for the British or the Americans is just to get power – gain power that all.

Aan (F): Gain power over all the world?

Huma (F): Yes.

Mysha (F): Yes. Look at the Iraq issue, what is it all about? It's just oil –

Aan (F): They wanted oil so they finished Saddam Hussain?

Mysha (F): No, no – they want power, they want the natural resource –

Huma (F): Exactly.

Mysha (F): I've lived in Saudi Arabia. I've heard this in many newspapers over there that, umm, these warning letters they are getting from Americans, the Kings of KSA that they can attack anytime, because Saudi Arabia is actually a very good resource – natural reserve for oil – just gaining power, I guess, is the only mission they have.

Huma (F): Exactly.

Mysha, who had lived in Saudi Arabia for a significant part of her life, led this discussion and said that the actual motives of the US government related to gaining power which she linked to controlling the oil reserves of the region. In making this argument, she was drawing on the discourse of American imperialism. Her claim about the apprehension related to the possible US intervention in Saudi Arabia seems anomalous because the Saudi Royal family have been generally seen to be pliant and appeasing partners in the US strategic operations in the region (Billon and Khatib, 2004; Chomsky, 2006; Leaman, 2004). However, given the fact that like many other Middle Eastern dictatorships, the Saudi Royal Family lacks any democratic legitimacy, it is easy to see possible reasons for apprehension and anxiety at the heart of the Saudi royal establishment. It is expected that the Saudi Royal Family would be cognizant of the fact that their claim to power and privilege was greatly dependent on the support from the Western powers, especially the US. Billon and Khatib (2004) argue that the favoured status enjoyed by Saudi Arabia in the Middle East, and its special relationship with the US, is contingent on the pliant acquiescence by the Saudi Royal Family to US diktat. Any action on the part of the Saudi Royal Family that frustrated US designs in the region could tilt the precarious balance in the country, precipitating the ousting of the regime. Iraq, along with other dissenters like Iran, were seen by the US and its allies as a potential threat to the stability and balance of power in the region (Leaman, 2004). Maintaining this stability and balance of power has been an important part of the US government's geostrategic policy in the region:

Access to Middle East oil on favorable terms remains a national-security priority for the U.S. government, and Saudi Arabia will be a U.S. ally so long as the Saudi government cooperates with the U.S. efforts to maintain a steady flow of reasonably priced oil.

(Leaman, 2004: 246)

The discourse of gaining control over Middle Eastern oil as an underlying cause of the US led 'war on terror' became increasingly common in the years after the September 11, 2001 attacks. For example, according to an American philosopher, Leaman (2004: 242-3), the main reason for the 2003 invasion of Iraq had nothing to do with terrorist threat or securing the weapons of mass destruction:

...the Bush administration decided to invade Iraq for reasons that have nothing to do with 9/11, and that greed and a desire to extend American power are motives in U.S. planning...In Iraq thousands of people have been killed or wounded in demonstration of U.S. power and in pursuit of U.S. control of oil, and the destruction of lives continues with no end in sight.

He argues that the intervention in Iraq with the view to oust Saddam Hussein was already on the cards when George Bush became the President earlier in 2001. Similarly, Baker (2007a: 10) also maintains that the plan to topple the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq 'were in place before September 11'. The US government seized the September 11 attacks as an opportunity to implement these plans (Leaman, 2004; Baker, 2007a, 2007b). Similarly, Chomsky (2006: 26) claims that the:

Bush administration had already decided to attack Iraq, well before Congress was "hoodwinked" into authorizing the war in October 2002 and also before the UN was invited either to endorse Washington's plan to use violence or to become, according to President Bush, "irrelevant".

Thus, the discourse of American imperialism, suggesting US ambition to control the Middle Eastern oil reserves as an underlying motive behind the 'war on terror' was quite common when this research was carried out. Some of the participants of my study also drew on this discourse to criticise the 'war on terror', suggesting that the 'war' was being used by the US as a façade for its imperial ambitions to secure control over oil reserves in the Middle East.

The participants were critical of US actions as part of its 'war on terror' and regarded it as exploitative and unjust. For example, speaking in the context of invasion of Iraq Asma (F, FG1) said:

...it's wrong, and everybody feels resentment against the United States of America for doing so...it is the survival of the fittest around here...I mean they

are the most powerful thing around here...So, morally speaking it is definitely incorrect.

Asma criticised the invasion of Iraq by arguing that what the US did was to follow the principle of 'survival of the fittest'. By making this claim, she was drawing on the discourse of the hierarchy of nation states and the discourse of American imperialism.

Asma's criticism resonates with Leaman's (2004) argument that powerful countries often resort to force to achieve their strategic objectives in the international space because they know that there is no one else powerful enough to challenge their actions. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US emerged as the world's lone superpower. By virtue of being the world hegemon, the US appropriated certain privileges and prerogatives that enabled it to 'force global economic integration on its terms' (2004: 238). In order to achieve their imperial objectives, the successive US governments did not hesitate to take unilateral decisions to use of force in the international arena, many a time contravening international law:

They view the exercise of power as its own justification, following the old logic that "large countries do what they wish, while small nations accept what they must." This is the logic of empire, and there are no moral barriers to the use of force in such thinking, just the practical limits of available forces and resources. If the United States is successfully able to impose its will on Iraq, we should be prepared for further U.S. military action in other countries as part of a continuing effort to extend American power. This is morally unacceptable.

(Leaman, 2004: 245)

Tabish (M, FG5) suggested that the US dominated the UN and most countries of the world:

...the entire UN, it is fully dominated by the US – fully dominated by the US, and a little bit by other countries who are supporters of US, in fact. I won't say that they are like Britain. You can take the examples of other major countries like France. It almost supports America in every way. You can go to other examples – all other countries – 90% of the countries in the world are pro-US. And I feel it's just because some are part of that theory that we have to dominate the world and the others are affected by them. They want to save themselves and they want to follow them – okay whatever you say we agree

to it but don't affect us! And when someone stands up to it [the US] – Saddam Hussein did and he's no more! Whenever Iran stands up to it and you can see what is happening to Iran. Whenever Pakistan stands up to it you can see what happens –

Tabish argued that the United Nations was dominated by the US and its 'supporters'. He argued that vast majority of the countries in the world supported the US. Some of them did this because they wanted to 'dominate the world' with the US and the others wanted to 'save themselves' and not antagonize the superpower. He suggested that the consequences of standing up to the US could be dire, as was borne out by the example of Saddam Hussein, Iran and even on certain occasions Pakistan. Thus, according to him neither the UN nor any other country was in a position to challenge US' imperialist ambitions.

Maher (M, FG1) argued that another underlying cause for the 'war on terror', in addition to the desire to control oil resources, was supporting Israel:

I would say the whole action [the 'war on terror'] basically is, has actually other ulterior motives which can range from oil on one hand to greater Israel on the other hand, where Israel want hegemony in the region, and wants its enemies and, umm, its opponents in the region to be cut down to a level where it can establish its hegemony.

Maher's arguments echo those of many writers (e.g. Billon and Khatib, 2004; Leaman, 2004; Baker, 2007a, 2007b) who have argued that safeguarding Israeli interests in the Middle East has been high on the US strategic foreign policy agenda. For example, Baker (2007a) argues that Saddam Hussein was seen as a significant impediment to Israel's expansionist agenda in the Middle East. Therefore, removal of his government was an important priority of the US government, well before the September 11, 2001 attacks. He writes:

The most expansive version of the neoconservative agenda to advance US and Israeli interests found forthright expression in a position paper written for the newly elected Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu of the Likud party in 1996, entitled 'Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm', published by the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies. The document calls for a 'clean break from the peace process', the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza and the elimination of Saddam's regime in Iraq as a prelude to

regime changes in Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iran. The authors all became influential players in the second Bush administration.

(2007a: 10)

Similarly, Tabish (M, FG5), said that the US' hegemonic agenda was a key issue in the region and affected the 'entire world':

I think it's high time that the world has to realize what America is doing. America at the moment is just influencing the entire world. What has it done to Lebanon? What has it done to Iraq? What is it doing with Palestine using Israel? What is it doing with Iran? What is it doing with Afghanistan? And what about Pakistan?! North Korea – they're all infected by it! And, yet the world doesn't realize and sees it as 'war on terror' and all that!

Drawing on the discourse of American imperialism, Tabish argued that the US had pursued its strategic agenda in a number of countries. This included taking punitive actions against various countries, whenever it construed them as thwarting its imperial designs.

Thus, some of the participants in focus groups one, two, four, five and six argued that US imperial ambitions were an important underlying cause of the 'war on terror'. Drawing on the discourse of American imperialism, they cited self-interest, securing control over Middle Eastern oil reserves, maintaining its status as the world hegemon and facilitating Israeli hegemony in the Middle East as the underlying causes of the 'war on terror'.

Another underlying cause of the 'war on terror' discussed in three focus groups (2, 5, and 6) was religion and the targeting of Muslims and the Islamic World. For example, in focus group two, some of the participants argued that the 'war on terror' was actually a 'war on Islam':

Fahad: America is distorting the face of Islam [others voice their agreement].
And the war on terrorism has become, you know, more of a war on Islam.

Fareeha: Exactly, war on Islam.

Saima: They [the US] are just using the name.

Fahad: It could be some other communist country that was bothering America, and America, you know, using this against Islam.

Fareeha: If some other country does something, they don't even look at it! They are like okay fine, no problem...You can look at it logically. Look at all the countries that he attacked –

Harris: They are all Muslim countries.

Fareeha: Exactly!

Drawing on the discourse of religion in national and international politics, discussed in chapter 3, the participants argued that the target of the 'war on terror' were all Muslim countries. Fahad and Fareeha, therefore, suggested that it was 'a war on Islam'. Saima suggested that the US was just using the term Islam as a ploy in the 'war on terror'. Her claim resonated with Baker's (2007a: 7) argument that the danger of radical Islam was conjured up as a useful ploy for justifying the 'war on terror':

Islam today is most useful as the 'enemy' of choice in the so-called global war on terror. Today, when the logic of US withdrawal from Iraq gains support daily in America, only the Islamist imaginary provides arguments still found credible by a frightened American populace to sustain the occupation. The Islamist imaginary and the diffuse fears it evokes, unconstrained by logic or realism and quite unrelated to facts on the ground, is now more essential to empire than ever before. It is only reasonable to expect that the Islam imagined by empire will be with us for some time to come.

Similarly, some of the participants in focus group six also cited targeting Muslims and Islamic countries as the underlying cause of the 'war on terror':

Natasha (F): Then why – this is the question that comes in my mind all the time – why is it always a Muslim country? Why? Why does America always think that *Muslims* are terrorists?

Aan (F): They want to kill all the Muslims.

Naveed: Why?

Aan (F): You know, because the Muslim states are all – they all have – it's basically the natural resources – Americans – they do not want to use their own resources - they don't want to deplete them – they want to first finish off other countries' or get the power from them.

Natasha (F): Or maybe, America thinks that if all the Muslims come together –
[**Others:** They have no power!] and to turn them against each other is the

biggest scandal, is the biggest thing that he is doing. And he – America or whatever – India – they're all involved and they're trying – Israel – they're all trying to make us –

Aan (F): It's the Jewish lobby –

Natasha (F): Exactly. They're all trying to just, you know, break us apart, and then, break us apart, then break us into pieces – each piece break us –

Mysha (F): You know, there is this prophecy told by our prophet that Muslims, umm, one day will unite and will make a very big power – that's what America is afraid of – that it doesn't let the Muslims unite.

Huma (F): It's obvious when all the Muslim countries do unite together they're a much stronger power than America and I guess that is what they are afraid of. Once you have that is what you are scared of – the power being taken away. So, that's the only thing that attack is leading against that their power *might* be taken away – they don't even know if it's going to be taken away or not. So, this killing of innocent people –

In the above excerpt, the participants argued that all the countries that were targeted by the US as part of the 'war on terror' were Muslim ones. Huma argued that the 'war on terror' was driven by an apprehension on the part of the US that 'their power might be taken away', and the rest of the participants concurred and referred to the potential threat posed by a united Islamic World to US hegemony as an underlying cause of the war. Even though these participants cited attacking Muslim countries as an underlying cause of the US led 'war on terror', they did not draw on the discourse of the clash of civilizations proposed by Huntington (1996/2002). Instead, they drew on the discourses of religion in national and international politics and American imperialism.

Similarly, Tabish (M, FG5) also referred to the policies and actions of the US, which, according to him, disadvantaged the Islamic countries:

You can clearly see that America is the one breaking the non-proliferation treaty of the entire world, committing that they would not be transferring nuclear missiles and all that to any country...They've transferred, umm, the assets to Israel – they've used it. And now when it comes to India which is a non-Muslim state, they're ready to accept it as a nuclear power. And they're ready to make agreements with it, make nuclear reactors and products

related to that, so that they can improve upon their technology, and not – ignoring Pakistan!! What is that?! You can see that – the entire world should realize that what is happening all around! I feel the international powers are all mixed up and jumbled up with this and they're probably closing their eyes at the moment and they're behaving as if they did not notice. But, it's something illogical that they can't notice something going on around on such a massive scale.

He maintained that, notwithstanding its professed nuclear non-proliferation commitment, the US had facilitated Israel in acquiring nuclear capability. He also argued that the US had accepted India, 'which is a non-Muslim state', as a nuclear power and ignored Pakistan. In constructing this argument, he was drawing on the discourse of religion in national and international politics.

Thus, some of the participants in focus groups two, five and six argued that targeting Muslim countries was one of the underlying causes the 'war on terror'. However, the participants in these focus groups developed a slightly different emphasis in this argument. The participants in both focus groups two and six argued that targeting Muslims and the Islamic world was an underlying cause for the 'war on terror'. The participants in focus group six suggested that in targeting the Islamic countries, the US' aim was to prevent the oil rich Muslim countries to unite and challenge US as the world hegemon.

9.2 The Conduct of the 'War on Terror' – Jus in Bello

In this section, I discuss the participants' construction of the conduct of the 'war on terror' or jus in bello. Participants in all six focus groups made references to the conduct of the US led 'war on terror'. Before analysing the relevant data, I present a brief analysis of the unconventional nature of this 'war'.

9.2.1 The 'War on Terror' – a War without Borders and an Enemy Army

In this section, I briefly analyse the nature of the 'war on terror'. The 'war on terror' formally began soon after the September 11, 2001 attacks, when President Bush (2001a) said: 'Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.' He suggested that this war will be like no other because the enemy against which this 'war' was being waged comprised 'terrorists [spread] in more than 60

countries' (2001a: no page number). Thus, the 'war on terror' marked the beginning of a protracted unconventional conflict in which the markers of traditional warfare – enemy states, combating armies, and international borders – were obliterated, giving rise to a range of novel discourses like those of surgical strikes within the territories of ally states (e.g. drone attacks in Pakistan), unlawful combatants and preventive strikes. Larrinaga (2011), a professor of political studies, argues that we need a novel approach to understand the geopolitical events in the post-September 11 era:

...it is precisely through the way in which these events [related to 9/11 and the 'war on terror'] are effectively bound together through certain chains of equivalence that are articulated in their representation in relation to September 11th, that a vantage point can be created to provide an understanding of the governmental rationalities of security that underpin the war on terror and the contemporary global order at multiple sites of its production, with the intent of exploring how war beyond the battlefield has been rendered possible as a form of global governmentality through the "war on terror".

(2011: 310)

Thus, the 'war on terror' created situations that are hard to understand using the prism of conventional warfare. For example, Pakistan has been a front line ally of the US in this conflict, yet the latter has regularly attacked the former diplomatically, politically and militarily, during this protracted 'war'. In the next section, I analyse the research participants' constructions of the way the 'war on terror' was conducted.

9.2.2 The Participants' Critique of the Conduct of the 'War on Terror'

The Participants were generally critical of the way the 'war on terror' had been conducted. Many of them criticised the hurting and killing of innocent civilians. For example, Farah (F, FG4) said:

If you are fighting against terrorism, it does not mean that you spread terrorism. Afghanistan – the economy, everything in Afghanistan has been destroyed because of the attack – they said that the suspects are the Taliban and Osama bin Laden – it's not justified that for that you kill innocent – millions of innocent lives...

Drawing on the discourses of preventing harm to non-combatants and terrorism, Farah criticised the 'war on terror' and equated it with terrorism because, according to her, as a result of it 'millions of innocent lives' had been lost and Afghanistan had 'been destroyed because of the attack'.

Similarly, the participants in focus group five also criticised the 'war on terror' because it had killed innocent non-combatants:

Tabish (M): I don't think they [the US] care that a lot of people in Pakistan die, when we hit a bomb. When we hit a bomb – now, umm, there is an American intelligence report of CIA – at first – when they were 90% sure that, umm, the people were, umm, the, the Taliban were over a spot they would say that now we're gonna attack it; and now we're using our military aids and bombing in this area. And now all of a sudden they have started doing this at 50% - now if they are 50% sure that there might be Taliban, there might not be, and they can attack that area. And this is a part of their strategy –

Babur (M): Secondly, talking about sovereignty, they are also threatening Pakistan's sovereignty – they've bombed Pakistan, like, four times using spy planes – killed more than 70 innocent people!

Aamer (M): On the other hand they criticize Russia and other countries for, you know, destroying the sovereignty and integrity of other countries. But it's quite ironic, ironic, that they themselves are, you know, forces – their forces are in two sovereign countries! And they're killing people for nothing.

(FG5)

Tabish was referring to the drone attacks in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan, which the US government had initiated in 2004. Drawing on the discourse of preventing harm to non-combatants, he argued that the Americans did not care about Pakistani casualties as they had reduced the threshold for the likelihood of hitting militants substantially – the criterion that was used by the US military for launching a drone strike. Babur and Aamer criticised the 'war on terror' by drawing on the discourse of national sovereignty and the discourse of preventing harm to non-combatants.

Similarly, in focus group six, two participants criticized the 'war on terror' because it had killed innocent people:

Mysha (F): And kill innocent people [in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan's Tribal Areas] who weren't even – most of them didn't even know –

Natasha (F): Exactly! Most of them were, like, kids basically.

Mysha (F): Exactly.

Natasha (F): Now we see kids with guns. Who's done that? If you're calling Osama bin Laden a terrorist, I think Bush is the biggest terrorist, because of him all these little, innocent children they've become orphans. The wives become widows – whose fault is that if it's not Bush's fault?!

Mysha (F): The main terrorist according to me is Bush. Every crisis going on in the world is because of him.

Mysha and Natasha were very critical of the 'war on terror' which had killed 'innocent people' in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. Drawing on the discourse of preventing harm to non-combatants and the discourse of terrorism, Natasha and Mysha argued that President 'Bush is the biggest terrorist'.

In the second focus group, two participants, drawing on the discourse of state terrorism, discussed in chapter three, alluded to the perception in Iran about the US being a terrorist state. They implied that this perception was because of what it had done in Afghanistan and Iraq as part of the 'war on terror', including killing of civilian non-combatants:

Fahad (M): ...In Iran, they say that the US is the biggest terrorist around, why do they say that?

Saima (F): Exactly, why do they say that?

Fahad (M) & Saima (F): Because of what happened in Iraq, what happened in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan there was this very innocent wedding going on, and they just dropped two bombs there! *Why?*

(FG2)

Like Farah in the previous excerpt, Fahad and Saima, drawing on the discourses of preventing harm to non-combatants, terrorism, and state terrorism argued that the Iranian perception of the US as the 'biggest terrorist' was due to its disregard of the principle of preventing harm to civilian non-combatants.

When the fieldwork for this study was carried out, discourses constructing the US' use of force in various international conflicts as amounting to terrorism were not uncommon in the Pakistani media. For example, less than two months after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Saleem (2001) writing in the most widely circulated English daily of Pakistan suggested:

When Nic Kynaston, Managing Editor of Guinness World Records, decides to allocate a separate chapter to terrorism he is bound to seriously consider both President Harry Truman and President Bush Sr as top contenders. On 6 August 1945, at 8:15 am, an American B-29 bomber dropped 'Little Boy' over Hiroshima that incinerated at least 150,000 non-combatants. Sanctions imposed by Bush Sr have so far killed half a million Iraqi children.

Such discourses have not been confined to popular media. These have also become common in academic journals. For example, citing the case of Iraq, Adriaenssens and Baker (2012: 259) argue that the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 'will rank as one of the greatest war crimes of the twenty-first century'. The reasons they put forward for this claim were quite similar to the ones Farah suggested for equating US actions in Afghanistan with terrorism – killing of civilian non-combatants and the destruction of the Iraqi state

Similar to the accusations of terrorism levelled against President Bush and the US made by some of the participants in focus groups two and six, Adriaenssens and Baker (2012:278) argue that:

The illegal Iraq War of indiscriminate bombings, genocidal sanctions and a devastating invasion without legal or moral justification was a horrendous crime. Those responsible should be held accountable. They should face war crimes trials.

Thus, the 'war on terror' has been often criticised in popular media as well as academic journals, drawing on the discourse that portrays US actions in various international conflicts, including the 'war on terror', as constituting terrorist violence because of its disregard for one of the fundamental principles of just conduct of war or *jus in bello* – preventing harm to civilian non-combatants. Some of the participants in my study also criticised the 'war on terror' drawing on the discourses of preventing harm to non-combatants, terrorism and state terrorism.

In focus group five, two participants criticized the 'war on terror' because the manner in which it was conducted demonstrated the US government's disregard for non-Americans lives:

Aamer (M): Actually what they think is that if a person is an American he's our responsibility and wherever he goes we should provide him security and everything – like welfare – everything that one can imagine. But if he is not an American he is an acceptable loss. You can kill him for the larger cause and benefit the country. So this is what the thinking is.

...

Tabish (M): ... we see a lot of people dying in the Northern Areas or the Tribal Areas of Pakistan – on a daily basis 60, 70 killings – at least five or ten killings are done on regular basis [through the US drone strikes]. When we see that there was one, umm, reporter – Daniel Pearl – he was there and he was killed over there – it was hell – the entire world was like where is Daniel Pearl – where is it all? It was created into an international issue. And what about those dying people? Don't they have any value?! Don't they have any –

(FG5)

Tabish cited the killing of people in the Tribal areas of Pakistan on a 'regular basis' by the US, as part of the 'war on terror' and contrasted it with the case of the killing of the American journalist Daniel Pearl, which sparked severe protest from the US government. Both Aamer and Tabish argued that the US regarded harm inflicted to non-American as an 'acceptable loss'. In making this argument, they were drawing on the discourse of preventing harm to non-combatants and the discourse of American imperialism. By arguing that the harm caused to non-Americans was seen as 'acceptable loss', they were also problematizing and challenging the discourse of collateral damage.

Tabish's (M, FG5) comments, in the above excerpt, echo the insightful analysis by Butler (2004), a US academic and scholar, of how grieving over certain lives, considered valuable, serves to sustain violence in distant territories:

But those lives in Afghanistan, or other United States targets, who were also snuffed out brutally and without recourse to any protection, will they be ever as human as Daniel Pearl?... he is so much more easily humanized for most

United States citizens than the nameless Afghans obliterated by United States and European violence. But we have to consider how the norm governing who will be a grievable human is circumscribed and produced in these acts of permissible and celebrated public grieving, how they sometimes operate in tandem with a prohibition on the public grieving of others' lives, and how this differential allocation of grief serves the derealizing aims of military violence.

(Butler, 2004: 37)

In focus group four too, the participants criticised the 'war on terror' because the way it was conducted demonstrated disregard on part of the US government for the lives of citizens of the countries that were invaded:

Komal (F): You can't discuss it with somebody [the US] with such a closed and selfish mind. My self-interest is to go and invade Iraq, I'll do that –

Farah (F): Even if the UN does not allow you to do it –

Komal (F): Exactly, I don't care if you like it or not. I don't care if it kills millions of other people, just in the neighbouring country – I *don't* care! It's *just* my self-interest!

Farah (F): You are just saving yourself no matter at the expense of how many others – you just don't care. It's just – you save yourself.

Komal (F): The American lives are worth more than just normal human lives anywhere in the world. Especially, if you are a Muslim your self-worth even reduces much more.

(FG4)

Drawing on the discourse of American imperialism and the discourse of self-interest, Komal and Farah criticised the 'war on terror' because the way it was conducted demonstrated a totally callous attitude of the US government towards citizens of the countries that had been invaded.

Asad (2010) identifies a willingness, underpinning the Western liberal ideology, driving the successive US governments, to cause disproportionate casualties on their opponents:

For [Western] liberalism the readiness to multiply death—ours and theirs, but especially theirs—is a condition of freedom, a readiness to shift nonviolent politics into the politics of force.

Some research participants criticised the conduct of the 'war on terror' because it destroyed entire countries. For example, in focus group two, the following discussion took place:

Fahad (M): They've started attacking everyone –

Fareeha (F): What, what happened in Iraq?

Fahad (M): No weapons of mass destruction!

Naveed: They say that it was a case of misinformation.

Fareeha (F): Oh, right! On that basis they destroyed the entire country!

(FG2)

Fahad and Fareeha criticized the 'war on terror' because it led to the invasion and destruction of Iraq and that too on the basis of an unfounded suspicion.

Similarly, Farah (F, FG4) also denounced the 'war on terror' because of the havoc it had wreaked on Afghanistan and Iraq:

...it's not just [innocent] lives, it's the country, the economy, the development they've had. Now where is Afghanistan? They will have to start from scratch. Where is Iraq? Where is Iran? There is no development going on – they've gone back in time, way back in time. And just because of Al-Qaeda, it's a war for peace. Now, that I feel is an extremely absurd, umm, statement that they [the US government] have a war for peace – peace is not supposed to be associated with war.

Farah argued that as a result of the 'war on terror' not just innocent lives were lost, but great loss was inflicted on the states of Afghanistan and Iraq. She criticized all this damage and loss of life on the ground that it was done to punish members of an extremist group – the Al-Qaeda. She also challenged the discourse of doing justice and establishing peace used by President Bush, discussed in chapter 3, to construct the 'war on terror' as an instrument for establishing justice and peace in the world.

Participants in two focus groups (1 and 4) criticized the 'war on terror' because it did not achieve the purposes for which it was started. For example, Ahmer (M, FG1) said:

So, taking over Iraq, or taking over Afghanistan, they're like affecting a lot of people – that's totally wrong. If you look at Iraq right now, it's every other day, there is a suicide bombing, or there is something like that going on, people are getting killed –

As discussed in chapter 3, President Bush drew on the discourse of doing justice and establishing peace to construct the 'war on terror' as a just war. However, Ahmer argued that after the 2003 invasion, Iraq had become a very violent country where 'every other day' there was 'a suicide bombing'.

Like Ahmer, Adriaenssens and Baker (2012: 261) are also very pessimistic about the outcome of the Iraq war:

On a strategic level, it is now clear that the Iraqi war opened that devastated country both to intrusions by Iran and the infiltration for the first time of al-Qaeda and other extremists. Clearly, neither development served the interests of the Iraqi or American people. At the same time, the violent ending of the state and shattering of Iraqi society released the terrible demons of sectarianism, death squads and violent civil strife in the land, adding immeasurably to the killing and destruction.

Similarly, Komal (F, FG4) argued that even though the invasion of Afghanistan ousted the Taliban regime the militants spread to other countries:

One thing that the US troops in Afghanistan did they broke the back of the Taliban. The Taliban spread over the Arab countries, in Pakistan – they went – they went out of Afghanistan and spread all over the Arab countries...for the short term, it was a good move because you were able to break down the Taliban...So, for the time being it did some good but the aftermath was terrible! You had Iraq, you had Pakistan, you had bombings even during those invasions in Iraq & Afghanistan, bombings never stopped in Madrid or in London or in Pakistan or in any other place. So it did continue; for a short time you had – you had victory for a short time because you thought you had done the right thing. But in the long term what happened postwar alliance or what happened immediately, umm, after, let's say Iraq was attacked, that was terrible. It was not planned and you had unexpected events happening almost on daily basis everywhere – it's not just limited to one country, it's influencing millions of miles away. Troops are in Iraq but you have bombing in Madrid, you have bombings in London, troops are in Iran, you have bombings let's say

in Pakistan. So, the burden is shifted towards – on the whole world – nobody is safe any more.

Like Ahmer (M, FG1) in the previous extract, Komal also argued that the ‘war on terror’ had resulted in greater violence. She, in fact, claimed that as a result of the ‘war on terror’ violence had spread to ‘the whole world’ and ‘nobody is safe any more’. Like Ahmer and Komal, Chomsky (2006) also argues that American policies and actions have made the world a more dangerous place for everyone, including the US citizens.

In addition to talking about the conduct of ‘war on terror’ in Afghanistan and Iraq, participants in focus groups four, five and six were also highly critical of it because of its adverse effects on the region, especially Pakistan, resulting in a sharp increase in terrorist violence in the country. For example, Adil (M, FG4) criticised the ‘war on terror’ as it had destabilized the ‘whole region’:

For the long term, it’s only three years and [inaudible] the situation has become tense even further. I think for the next fifty years the world politics will be defined by the two attacks – one in Afghanistan and the other in Iraq. The whole region would be destabilized for the coming so many years, just because –

According to Adil, the ‘war on terror’ was a momentous event, the effects of which would be felt for a long time to come. He went on to say: ‘I think, we as Pakistanis feel it the worst...as we are going through such trauma...’. Adil was speaking in the context of unprecedented increase in terrorist violence in Pakistan, resulting in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto (see section 5.6 in chapter 5). Speaking in the same political context, participants in focus group four suggested that the enhanced terrorist violence in Pakistan was the work of some hidden forces:

Adil (M): ... I don’t know, just because they’re radical and fundamental – they’ve not become radical and fundamental overnight. I think, there is something that is motivating them – it’s probably money – I don’t know, there is some hand in the attacks which we cannot, umm, find out. There are terrorists there but there is something else as well.

Komal (F): There is a missing piece of the puzzle that we can’t find. People can’t identify that – there is a missing piece in the puzzle.

Adil (M): Here the Chinese engineers are getting abducted, and they're getting kidnapped, and they're getting killed. I don't know what Chinese engineers have got to do with terrorism...I think that should be an eye opener for us that we should realize that there is something else going on... So, I think, if we see a little deeper, we should realize that there is something going on, which we cannot decipher.

(FG4)

Thus, Adil and Komal argued that the spate of terrorism in Pakistan around the time when this focus group was conducted was not what it appeared to be. Komal (F, FG4) suggested that it was the US that was trying to destabilise Pakistan in order to create a pretext for drawing in troops like it had done in Afghanistan and Iraq:

Certain people also believe that the US is trying to destabilize Pakistan that they will be able to draw in troops. You have presidential candidates in their foreign policy strategies stating they will draw out troops from Iraq into Pakistan. So, that clearly shows you what the mentality is. Even somebody running for the White House, even though he is not President, he still thinks that the right thing to do after getting into the White House is to draw troops in Pakistan and get them out of Iraq and Afghanistan. There is no difference between the Republicans and the Democrats – it's the same thinking all over. And it takes a lot, a lot...to change that thinking – that attacking is not a solution to *your* [US'] problems. It'll just increase our [Pakistan's] problems much more and problems for similar countries face like we do.

Saira (F, FG5) also suggested that Obama, the then US presidential candidate, had 'publicly said that we are going to attack Pakistan, if we feel there are insurgents.'

Similarly, Aan (F, FG6) also suggested that the US was behind the rise in violence in Pakistan:

Aan (F): There's somebody else behind all these things.

Naveed: Who's that?

Aan (F): It's the Americans, I think. I think it's the Americans because they want to finish everyone – one by one they want to finish all countries, and they want to get the power. They put loggerheads – they, like, Indians – they want to make Pakistan fight against India – India should be at loggerheads

with Pakistan – then whatever happens the Americans are going to pacify both of them and then they are going to get whatever they want.

Aan argued that the US wanted to ‘finish all countries’ including Pakistan. She suggested that it was trying to create instability in the region by pitting Pakistan against India.

The discourse of US trying to destabilise Pakistan has been quite common in Pakistan. Mazari (2009c: no page number), a former chairperson of the department of defence and strategic studies at the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad writes:

...[an]other cause for chaos [in Pakistan] can be resolved more readily – that of the growing intrusiveness and questionable role of the US within Pakistan...As if all these US military and undercover officials crawling all over the sensitive parts of the country were not enough, it appears that the US is also using private covert setups to further a dubious and threatening agenda within Pakistan. The centre of these suspicious covert operations is Peshawar, and the central organisation is Creative Associates International Inc. (CAII – as opposed to CIA)...CAII has been terrifying the residents of University Town Peshawar because of its US security guards – ostensibly from that notorious US security contractor Blackwater (now renamed Xe Worldwide) whose employees already face charges of murder, arms smuggling and child prostitution in Iraq.

Thus, some participants in focus groups four and six suggested that as part of its ‘war on terror’, the US was instigating a spate of violence that had taken hold of Pakistan at that time. Zoya (F, FG4) articulated a somewhat different take on the rise of terrorist violence in Pakistan:

I think, it’s the whole cycle of suffering. I mean, we suffer either way. We support them [the US] – how you suffer by supporting them is see all these religious groups within your own country are threatening your own security. Why are they against the government? They say the government is pro-American. So, they target the innocent people, just to influence the government, right? And if you turn anti-American, then Americans will come in and threaten your security again. So, I think, you suffer either ways.

Zoya was suggesting the rise in terrorism in Pakistan was because of its government’s decision to join the US led ‘war on terror’. This, according to her, had placed Pakistan

between a rock and a hard place. This was because if Pakistan had not joined the 'war on terror' it would have incurred the wrath of the US government and, because it had joined the 'war', the extremist groups operating in the country had started attacking the people and the state of Pakistan.

Huma (F, FG6) argued that because of the Pakistan government's decision to side with the US in its 'war on terror', the country had been isolated:

When the Afghanistan war happened Pakistan refused to side with Afghanistan – all the Muslims isolated us. Now that we are totally helpless – we're in their [the US'] hands – they can do anything with us.

According to Huma, the decision to side with the US had made Pakistan totally dependent on the US. Komal (F, FG4) argued that Pakistan had been coerced into joining the war on terror: 'We were told to do something – we never had any choice...We didn't have any option, I mean, other than to be pro-US.'

Adil (M, FG4) made a radical suggestion:

I somehow would have no problem with US troops coming to Pakistan – I mean not attacking Pakistan but having troops in Pakistan – because our troops are getting killed for their war. So, I mean it would be better if they come in as well and they could get a first-hand experience of what's going on here.

He was arguing that Pakistan had had enough of following US diktat and fighting the militants. He suggested that the US should send their troops in Pakistan so that Pakistani soldiers were not 'killed for their war'.

Thus, some of the participants in focus groups four, five and six were very critical of the way the US had conducted the 'war on terror', especially because of the adverse impact it had had on the law and order situation in and the stability of Pakistan.

This section has demonstrated how some of the participants from various focus groups criticised the US led 'war on terror' on the basis of how it was conducted. The grounds that they cited while doing so included that the 'war on terror' had harmed non-combatant civilians, including children, demonstrated a callous disregard for the lives of the citizens of the countries which had been attacked, had destroyed entire countries on the pretext of punishing militant groups, had failed to achieve the

objectives for which it was started, had led more violence, which had spread to many parts of the world and had destabilised Pakistan.

9.3 Discussion

This chapter has demonstrated the participants' constructions of the 'war on terror' – the causes for which it was started (*jus ad bellum*) and the way it was conducted (*jus in bello*). Most young people who participated in the study were highly critical of the 'war on terror' on both these grounds.

In terms of the causes for which the 'war on terror' was started, some participants referred to the justifications put forward by the US government and some suggested underlying, ulterior causes. The justifications put forward by the US government that they referred to included self-defence and retaliation, findings weapons of mass destruction, liberating the Afghani and Iraqi people from oppressive regimes and introducing democracy in Iraq. In most cases, the participants were very critical of these justifications.

The participants' constructions of the ulterior causes of the 'war on terror' included American imperial ambitions related to control of Middle Eastern oil reserves, retaining its status as the world hegemon, facilitating Israel's hegemony in the Middle East and persecuting Muslims and the Islamic World.

By denouncing most of the justifications put forward by the US government and suggesting underlying, ulterior causes for the 'war on terror', the participants constructed the 'war on terror' as being an unjust war. In constructing their argument they drew on the discourses of self-defence, supreme emergency, national sovereignty, legitimate authority, hierarchy of nations, international legal order responsibility to protect and religion in national and international politics.

The participants were also very critical of the way in which the 'war on terror' had been conducted. They criticised the conduct of the 'war' because it had destabilized Pakistan by unleashing an unprecedented spate of violence and terrorism, led the US government to coerce Pakistan into becoming its ally, killed civilian non-combatants, demonstrated total disregard for the lives of the citizens of the countries that had been invaded, destroyed entire countries, failed to achieve its aims, resulted in an increase in terrorist violence, and made the world a more dangerous place. They

constructed their arguments by drawing on the discourses of preventing harm to non-combatants, terrorism, state terrorism and American imperialism. They also challenged the discourse of collateral damage. Some participants also problematized the discourse of doing justice and establishing peace used by President Bush.

Very little, if any, research has been carried out with young people about their constructions of the 'war on terror'. However, it would be interesting to analyse my finding in relation to two other pieces – Durrani and Dunne's (2010) study, also discussed in chapters five, six and seven, and Shihade's (2011) experience of teaching a course in one US and one Pakistani University.

As discussed in this chapter, the young people who participated in my study were highly critical of the causes and conduct of the 'war on terror'. In most cases, they criticised the US government for carrying out the 'war on terror' rather than the American people per se. This was in contrast to the participants in Durrani and Dunne's (2010: 228) research, who constructed the Americans as the 'other' and presented them as 'the enemy of Islam and Pakistan'. They used religion as the only criterion for constructing the US as the 'other'.

Shihade (2011) presents his experience of teaching courses that problematized the September 11 attacks and the 'war on terror' in two different universities – the University of California at Berkeley and the Lahore University of Management Sciences in Pakistan (LUMS). LUMS is a prestigious private sector university in Pakistan attended mostly by Pakistani middle class young people, like the ones who participated in my study. Similar to the participants of my study, the Pakistani students of Shihade's (2011: 229) course saw 'direct U.S. involvement in their country'. Shihade (2011: 230) suggests that the Pakistani students on his course did not 'put much trust in the [Pakistan] government'. They were critical of the Pakistani government for doing 'the bidding of the United States'. They also suggested that the militant attacks in the country were in retaliation to the Pakistan government's joining the 'war on terror'. However, Shihade does not report any analysis, by his students, of the September 11 attacks and the 'war on terror' in the context of US imperial ambitions in the wider world, especially the Middle East.

The American students who were enrolled on Shihade's (2011) course at the University of California stood in contrast to the participants of my study in at least two respects.

Firstly, according to Shihade, the American students were generally not very ready to question the official narrative of events presented by the US government. Secondly, they were unwilling to engage with the adverse impact of the US government policies and actions in the Middle East. The Pakistani students' more critical stance may have been due to the direct effects of the 'war on terror' on their country and their own lives. Moreover, as discussed in chapter five, young people in Pakistan are generally quite sceptical of the leaders and the government in their country.

10 Summary, Reflections and Implications

In this final chapter, I draw together the threads of the argument that I have been constructing in this thesis by summarising the findings, reflecting on the process of conducting the research and considering the implications for education and future research.

10.1 Summary of Findings

In this section, I present a summary of my findings. (For a more detailed discussion of these, see chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). By doing so, I aim to offer a response to the question that I set out to explore at the beginning of this research: How do middle class Pakistani young people construct contemporary international conflicts? I do so by first summarising the content of their constructions. Next, I discuss the process of construction.

10.1.1 Participants' Constructions of Pakistan and International Conflicts

The participants argued that Pakistan was characterised by widespread poverty and social inequality, and that it had a chequered history of democracy. They suggested that the political leaders were inefficient and corrupt. They also constructed it as an Islamic state. (See chapter 5.)

They described the world as sharply divided between a world hegemon – the US – and all other countries. They identified Pakistan as being at the lower end of the hierarchy of nations. They identified various groups of countries (e.g. the West, the oil-rich countries, the Islamic countries), and various forms of political organisation (e.g. communism, socialism, capitalism, dictatorship, democracy). (See chapter 6.)

The discussion of international conflicts focused mainly on two current conflicts– the Pakistan-India conflict (see chapter 7) and the September 11 attacks and the subsequent 'war on terror' (see chapters 8 and 9). They discussed the causes as well as the conduct of both these conflicts.

In the context of the Pakistan-India conflict, they suggested that the two countries were traditional adversaries. They put forward various reasons for the mutual hostility between them, which included the circumstances surrounding the partition of India

and the dispute over which country Kashmir be part of; competing economic interests; and the repeated failure of peace talks.

In relation to the September 11 attacks, the participants put forward two sets of causes – one in line with the official US version of events and the other presenting a counter-narrative, based on various conspiracy theories (see chapter 8). Thus, some participants suggested that the attacks had been carried out by Al-Qaeda operatives because of the resentment they had had against the West, especially the US, as a result of its previous actions in the Middle East and Afghanistan, which they constructed as exploitative and unfair. Other participants argued that the attacks were orchestrated by the US establishment itself to provide a pretext for pursuing its imperial ambitions, especially gaining control over the rich Middle Eastern oil reserves, and to discredit Islam.

The participants also discussed the causes of the ‘war on terror’ initiated by the US in response to the September 11 attacks. Their constructions of the causes of this conflict also fell into two categories – those in line with the US government’s version and those suggesting an ulterior, underlying cause (see chapter 9). Those participants whose constructions were close to the US government’s account suggested that the US initiated the ‘war’ in retaliation for the attacks and in self-defence. Participants spoke of many of the US government’s justifications for the war on terror (finding and destroying weapons of mass destruction; liberating the peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq from tyrannical regimes; and introducing democracy in Iraq), but problematized and challenged these, arguing that there were other underlying motivations. They argued that the ‘war on terror’ was being used by the US establishment as a façade for its imperial agenda, which included increasing its international clout and power, gaining control over the oil reserves of the Middle East, facilitating Israeli hegemony in the Middle East and targeting Muslims and the Islamic World. By drawing on the discourses of international legal order, national sovereignty, legitimate authority, American imperialism and religion in national and international politics, the participants argued that this was an unjust ‘war’.

The young people also talked about the conduct of each of these conflicts, identifying a range of ways in which these had been played out – conventional warfare, terrorism, including state terrorism, and destabilisation.

In relation to the Pakistan-India conflict in Kashmir, the participants described the progression from conventional warfare to terrorism. Some of them also maintained that in the post-cold war episteme, India had been trying to destabilise Pakistan. Whereas many participants constructed Kashmir as a rightful a part of Pakistan and suggested that the Kashmiri people had been subjected to extreme torture, they denounced the resort to terrorist violence by the freedom fighters in Kashmir as being unethical and unacceptable.

The participants who discussed the use of terrorism in the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US denounced it because they argued that terrorism was an unethical and unacceptable way of playing out a conflict.

The participants were critical of the way the 'war on terror' had been conducted. They argued that it had harmed non-combatant civilians and, hence, amounted to state terrorism, showing disregard for the lives of people whose countries had been invaded. They argued that the invasions contravened international laws; violated national sovereignty; and had destroyed entire countries. It had also failed to achieve its aims; led to more violence and resentment against the US; made the world a more dangerous place; and had destabilised the region (Middle East and South Asia), and especially Pakistan (see chapter 9). In particular, the participants were highly critical of US military activities in Pakistan, including the drone strikes in the Tribal Areas, and suggested that these had led to increased terrorism and destabilisation of the country.

Thus, the participants identified very few just causes of war, but accepted that some wars were inevitable, especially when talks repeatedly failed, when one country usurped another's territory, or when a country faced an existential threat. In particular they argued that it was wrong for rich and powerful countries to attack poorer countries for economic gain. All participants who spoke about terrorist violence denounced it as unethical and unacceptable. Similarly, they were very critical of all forms of violence and conflict that caused harm to non-combatant civilians. They constructed the consequences of war as a major concern because it destroyed countries, destabilised entire regions and bred resentment against the perceived aggressor.

10.1.2 The Process of Construction

In this section, I discuss the process of construction: the participants' enthusiasm during the sessions; the sources they drew on; the judgments they made; and the ways in which they constructed arguments.

10.1.2.1 Participants' Interest in Politics

The young people who participated in my research appeared very keen and enthusiastic to talk about issues pertaining to national and international politics. This finding is apparently in contrast to what many others (e.g. Henn and Weinstein, 2006; Fieldhouse, Tranmer and Russell, 2007; Berry, 2008; Zvonovskii, 2009) have reported— young people's declining interest in politics. However, the picture is more complex than it seems to be because in most studies cited above the percentage of young people who turn out to vote is used as the litmus test of political participation. Actually voting and being interested in political issues are clearly two different things. Some writers (e.g. Jowell and Park, 1998; Kimberlee, 2002; Henn, Weinstein and Forrest, 2005; Henn and Weinstein, 2006) have suggested that whereas there has been a decline in the percentage of young people who turn out to vote, they are not necessarily politically apathetic as their (dis)engagement with politics is qualitatively different from earlier generations in a variety of ways. Most young people who participated in my study were either not eligible to vote or would have just acquired the right to do so because the minimum legal age for voting in Pakistan is 18. Therefore, it would have been difficult to comment on their 'engagement' with politics, based on the criteria of exercising the right to vote. However, all young people who were asked to participate in my research were willing to do so, and they talked very enthusiastically about national and international politics during the focus group sessions.

Based on my experience of living in Pakistan and working with many young people, I know that there is a widespread disenchantment with mainstream politics and politicians and this was also borne out by the constructions of my research participants of political leaders and the institution of democracy in Pakistan (see chapter 5). Though I did not specifically ask them about their future ambitions, some of them did

talk about pursuing careers in business and other professions. None of them mentioned that they may want to become professional politicians. However, this disenchantment with the political process clearly does not signal a lack of interest in national and international affairs, which were discussed with enthusiasm and, at times, even passion.

10.1.2.2 The Sources of the Discourses Used

The young people who participated in my study drew on a range of discourses to discuss international conflicts. These included the discourses of international legal order, national sovereignty, preventing harm to non-combatants, terrorism and state terrorism (See chapters 7, 8 and 9 for a more detailed discussion of the discourses used.). While I did not ask participants explicitly to say anything about the sources of their ideas, I can suggest some possible sources. It seems likely that these included family discussions, the Model United Nations Conferences that many of the participants would have had the experience of participating in, school textbooks and cable television and the internet.

The participants, at times, demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of international politics. Their use of the discourses of international legal order, legitimate authority, Marxism and capitalism are cases in point. These sophisticated discourses were prevalent amongst middle class Pakistanis, and it is, therefore, likely they would have come across these discourses within their own extended families. These discourses sometimes reflected their family backgrounds. For example, participants in one school, located in a military cantonment, drew on discourses that exonerated the army of any blame for the problems confronting Pakistan at the time when I carried out the fieldwork for my study. Jowell and Park (1998) suggest that young people's political orientations are significantly influenced by their parents' political affiliations. My data suggests that they may also be influenced by parental occupations and milieu.

A second source of sophisticated discourses, I would suggest, was the Model United Nations conferences which many of them had attended. From my own professional experience of working for many years in the field of education in Pakistan, I know that, over the years, such conferences have become an important part of the co-curricular calendar of many private secondary schools in the country. Groups of students are

allocated to perform the roles of the delegation of different countries of the world representing their respective nations in various organs of the United Nations like the Security Council, World Health Organisation and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. As delegates in such conferences, young people, like the ones who participated in my study, get to discuss real international issues like the Iraq war, polio eradication and US drone attacks. Thus, it is likely that the participants of my study came across some of the discourses that they used to talk about international conflicts while preparing for and attending these conferences.

Some of the arguments they used were less sophisticated, either presenting conflicts in very simplistic terms, or drawing on flawed evidence.

It is likely that some of the discourses of this sort came from their textbooks, especially those related to Pakistan-India conflict, which was often constructed by them in black and white terms (for example, demonising India and constructing it an enemy). Pakistan Studies textbooks often present the Pakistan-India conflict by drawing on discourses that often construct it in simplistic binary terms (e.g. Rabbani, 2009). For a more detailed discussion of this, see chapter 7. Durrani and Dunne (2010) have also commented on the way the social studies textbooks in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan may have influenced students' construction of the Pakistan-India conflicts.

Since the participants of my research also had access to internet and cable television, these were also among the sources of the discourses which they drew upon. For example, while discussing the September 11, 2001 attacks, they said that the source of some of their arguments were documentaries on the internet. I suggested that *Loose Change* was a likely documentary that they would have seen (see chapter 8). They used these discourses with considerable enthusiasm, and very uncritically, generally accepting the evidence offered in the documentary. One explanation of this could be that the documentaries exonerated Muslims and blamed the US government – a perspective that resonated with the young people. Moreover, they may also have heard such discourses in their everyday lives. Knight (2008) discusses the role of the internet as one of the most important sources of counter-discourses related to the September 11, 2001 attacks.

10.1.2.3 Ethical Judgments

The young people who participated in my research made various ethical judgments while talking about international conflicts. Most of them rejected the 'war on terror' as an unjust war because, according to them, it did not have a just cause and was not conducted in an ethical manner and, as such contravened the principles of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. In fact, they argued that the 'war on terror' was being used a façade by the US for implementing its imperial agenda across the world. They censured the US for violating international law and showing disregard for the lives of people who lived in the countries that had been invaded.

They also unequivocally denounced terrorist violence whether it was used by the freedom fighters in Kashmir, the perpetrators of the September 11, 2001 attacks, or a nation state, such as the US as part of its 'war on terror'.

In some cases, while making these judgments, they engaged in some very interesting and sophisticated debates. For example, in one of the focus groups, while discussing the justness of the Iraq war they engaged in an interesting discussion about who constituted the legitimate authority. Whereas some argued that Saddam was a legitimate authority within Iraq, another participant suggested that by oppressing and torturing his own people he had forfeited the right to sovereign immunity. They also debated the boundaries of national and international law and how the tensions between the two could, at times, make judging the justness of wars problematic and contentious. For a more detailed discussion of this, see chapter nine.

10.1.2.4 Use of Analogies

The participants argued with each other and drew on a range of evidence and some analogies to persuade others of the validity of their arguments. For example, while criticizing the conduct of the 'war on terror' they contrasted it with the way wars were conducted in the early history of Islam. They also cited instances from medieval Indian history to substantiate and elaborate their ethical judgments about contemporary international conflicts. In one focus group the participants debated the justification of the US invasion of Iraq using the analogy of a family. They used this to discuss the notions like legitimate authority and national sovereignty. One participant gave the example of her mother's authority and said that whereas her mother could advise her and her siblings about their behaviour and conduct, she could not do so to other

participants and their siblings because her authority did not extend to other people's families. She used this to problematize the US justification for the invasion of Iraq to liberate the Iraqi people from an oppressive dictator. (For a more detailed discussion see chapter 9.)

10.1.3 Limitations of Participants' Constructions

Whereas many of the participants' constructions were insightful and sophisticated, I also identified some limitations. In many cases, they constructed events and made ethical judgments in rather black and white terms, categorizing events as 'right' or 'wrong'. Very few participants looked at any issue from more than one perspective. This is, of course, the way that a great deal of debate is conducted – in the print and electronic media and in social settings. However, this may also relate to the way school curricula are designed and delivered.

From my experience of working in schools in Pakistan, I know that the predominant model of curriculum planning used is what Ross (2000) and Kelly (2004) refer to as the content driven model. In this model of curriculum planning the focus is on the knowledge content of what needs to be learnt. A pupil's mind is considered to be a '*tabula rasa*' or a 'clean sheet' (Kelly, 2004: 28). S/he is required to internalize a body of valuable, authentic knowledge. Given the essentialism underpinning this model, it sits uncomfortably with pedagogical approaches that value discussion, debate and problematization of issues, encouraging the learner to *construct* authentic, albeit tentative, knowledge and understanding – an approach to learning, which Freire (1970/2005: 80) refers to as 'problem-posing education'. This problem can possibly be overcome by reviewing the way school curricula are constructed.

Another limitation, closely related to the one discussed above, was that the participants seemed willing to accept accounts and claims without verifying the validity and authenticity of the evidence. In particular, there was a worrying tendency to accept 'facts' reported in documentaries. This issue again can be related to the model underpinning curricular design in Pakistan. Since the knowledge offered through the curriculum is considered indisputably authentic and indisputable, hardly any need is seen for verifying the evidence on which it is predicated. As a result pupils become accustomed to accept received knowledge without trying to assess its authenticity.

10.2 Reflections on the Research Process

The research process that led to the construction of this thesis has been a long, arduous, exhausting and fascinating one. When I embarked upon this journey, I was a total novice, not that I thought so at that time! I had a vague idea of what I wanted to do but it took me considerable time to formulate a clear focus for my investigation. In fact, the focus of the research continued to evolve and develop as I proceeded with the study. This in the later stages often made me think that had I had a clearer idea of what my research was going to be at an earlier point in time, it would have been so much better. It would have helped me avoid following paths that led to many a blind alley, read more purposefully and design a tighter investigation. However, these thoughts have also led me to realise that these blind alleys were not so blind after all, as going adrift helped me 'find' my way.

Going through my transcripts, many a time I wondered why I didn't ask a different question, follow up on participants' response or on some occasions restrain myself from steering the discussion. However, I also now realise that learning the intricacies of social research are as important an outcome of a PhD journey as the actual findings themselves.

While reading the transcripts, I also realised that I was not able to follow up on what individual participants had said. There had also been limited opportunity to find how individual participants constructed various aspects of the two conflicts that they discussed. Therefore, in any conclusions that I have drawn, I have inevitably, to some extent, ironed out the nuances of individual constructions. Had I used individual interviews I could have overcome some of these problems. However, after careful thinking, I concluded that by using focus groups I had made the right decision. This was because the focus and nature of my investigation was such that it lent itself very well to young people discussing the relevant issues with one another in a peer group setting. Moreover, had I used individual interviews, I would have been co-constructing the outcomes to a much higher degree through the questions I would have asked and the prompts I might have used. This reflection, however, leads to a humbling conclusion that any insight that I might have gained from my research cannot claim to have captured the complexities of how each of these young people constructed their understanding of the contemporary international conflicts that were discussed.

As a result of this study, I have come to appreciate the complexity of the processes involved in social research. Rather than being neat and linear, social research is a complex, iterative process. It is hard to visualise the finished product during the early stages of the journey. Moreover, I realised that, at times, feeling lost was okay, even inevitable. This is because any aspect of the social world, howsoever small, that one chooses to research is tantalisingly complex and rich. It is inevitable that while trying to make sense of this complexity, there will be times when one feels overwhelmed and lost.

Another important lesson that I learnt was the importance of reflexivity in social research. By reflexivity I mean the skill of stepping outside your own subjectivity and trying to discern what the data says rather than what you *think* it says. It took me a while to learn this lesson as during the initial stages of analysis, I would enthusiastically start ‘interpreting’ the data. Many a time my supervisors asked me to review my analysis and see if the claims that I had made accurately conformed to the data. I gradually realised how much own personal history coloured what I saw around me. This came home with force especially while analysing data about the Pakistan-India conflict. On my supervisors challenging some of my analysis, I realised how being a middle class Pakistani and having studied social studies textbooks similar to the ones I have critiqued in chapter 7 had made me make claims that were not entirely substantiated by the data itself. This was one of the most powerful lessons as a result of which I have started looking at the social world from a different perspective. Notwithstanding this experience, I must admit that one can never entirely step out of one’s own self. Therefore, any insights gained from social research are bound to be culturally and historically located and contingent.

Doing this research has helped me learn the skill of building an argument – weaving a meaningful narrative out of immensely messy and tangled yarn. Building an argument in this thesis has been like telling a coherent and fascinating story by making sense of what at times seemed to be a chaotic mass of data.

10.3 Implications for Education

In this section, I discuss the implications of the findings of my study for education and future research.

10.3.1 Educating Young People with a Sense of Democratic Activism – a case for Curriculum Reform

As discussed earlier, whereas the young people who participated in my research were very enthusiastic to talk about national and international politics, none of them suggested that they might want to pursue a career in politics. This is a source of concern because if young people like these ones are alienated from the political and democratic institutions and processes in the country then the hope of making things work better would remain a distant dream.

An important implication of this finding is that the curriculum should aim to develop a sense of political activism in young people. This can be done by providing opportunities for debating key social issues like education, economic development, democracy, the role of the armed forces in national life, militancy and extremism. Very importantly, the curriculum should encourage young people to explore and debate what it means for them to be a Pakistani. This is important because, as I have discussed in chapter seven, the existing Pakistan Studies curriculum employs discourses which construct Pakistani national identity as primarily predicated on a binary division between Pakistani Muslims and non-Muslim others. Durrani and Dunne (2010) have also argued that the discourses used in the social studies textbooks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan conflate Pakistani nationalism and Islam and use it to construct Pakistanis as Muslims who are fundamentally different from non-Muslim ‘other’, especially the Indian Hindus. Ross (2000: 148) argues that ‘the characteristics of national identity are of particular importance to the content and shape of the curricular debate.’ In the existing curriculum, the most likely area for the inclusion of opportunities for developing political activism in young people is Pakistan Studies, which is an amalgam of history, geography and civics. However, in the existing Pakistan Studies curriculum, there are no opportunities to do so. The Pakistan Studies curriculum not only fails to provide a space for critical dialogue and debate but it also presents a vision of the world predicated on discourses that construct the world in black and white terms. Pakistanis and Muslims are extolled and India is often presented as the enemy ‘other’. The military is often glorified by drawing on a discourse that constructs it as the saviour of the Pakistani state and by implication the religion of Islam. These discourses often reify the social world, leaving hardly any room for critical reflection and debate.

As discussed in chapter two, these effects are achieved through a number of internal and external constraints or exclusionary mechanisms, identified by Foucault (1970), which act on discourse. One such mechanism identified by Foucault (1970: 52) is 'taboo' (see chapter 2), which makes it difficult to speak about certain things. In the existing Pakistan Studies curriculum there are many such 'taboo' subjects, which are decided in advance for the learners and are not open for analysis through democratic dialogue and debate. Thus, there is a need to review the curriculum in this important area, providing opportunities to the learning community, comprising the learners and the teachers, to recognise that what is often presented as factual incontrovertible knowledge actually comprises discourses which are historically and culturally contingent and located.

The participants in my study were able to debate and problematize some topics like the two nation theory and the invasions of medieval India by Mahmud Ghaznavi, which are instances of issues that are usually presented in Pakistan Studies curriculum as beyond discussion and debate. This was probably because, as a result of their privileged backgrounds, they had access to a range of discourses about such issues. However, relying on pupils' personal family circumstances for developing such vital skills is a precipitous option, especially given the socio-political circumstances confronting Pakistan. There is an urgent need to revise the school curricula so the pupils can look at difference and not be repulsed by or be afraid of it because as Richardson (2007: 93) argues 'difference and otherness are inescapable part of the human condition.'

10.3.2 Curriculum Reform and Teacher Education

As discussed in section 10.2, partly the problem emanates from the content driven model of curriculum planning that is used by the schools. Therefore, there is a need to reconceptualise the curricular framework in order to ensure that the learners will be encouraged to problematize, challenge received knowledge and construct valid and authentic, albeit tentative, knowledge for themselves. Such a model of curriculum planning, rather than requiring the pupils to internalise a body of authentic, worthwhile knowledge, encourages them to focus on the process of their learning. This model of curriculum planning is in line with what Ross (2000: 137) refers to as the

‘process-driven curricula’ and what Kelly (2004: 81) suggests as the ‘process approach’ to curriculum planning.

However, curricular reform can never yield the desired results on its own, unless teachers who are to deliver the curriculum are also not equipped to do so. The majority of individuals who now are part of the teaching workforce have themselves been through the traditional system of schooling, which was predicated on the content driven approach to curriculum planning. Therefore, they have the tendency to transmit the received knowledge uncritically to the pupils, without encouraging them to question, challenge and problematize it. Holden (2007) emphasises the importance of educating trainee teachers appropriately to equip them to effectively deliver the citizenship curriculum in England. She argues that initial teacher education programmes need to ‘include time for trainee teachers to learn strategies for teaching about global and controversial issues’ (2007: 54). This need identified by Holden becomes even more imperative in countries like Pakistan where teachers are unfamiliar with ‘problem-posing education’ (Freire, 1970/2005: 80). Thus, education of new and existing teachers comes out as a high priority if we want children and young people to acquire the skills of critical analysis, problematizing received knowledge and evaluating the authenticity of claims.

10.4 Implications for Future Research

The findings of my study have some important implications for future research. Firstly, given the problem of militancy and extremism confronting Pakistan, similar research in state schools and madrassas (religious seminaries) would be needed in order to present a more complete picture of young Pakistanis’ constructions of international conflicts. Whereas researching pupils in state schools seems fairly straightforward, doing so in madrassas would require careful deliberation and tact because of the sensitivity of the topic and the potential for the research to be perceived as being ‘mala fide’. Notwithstanding the difficulties involved, doing so could prove very beneficial because the current Pakistan government is making a serious effort to address the issue of militancy and extremism.

Moreover, such research with pupils in schools could also prove very useful in countries like the UK where societies are becoming increasingly diverse comprising

people from a range of ethnic and religious backgrounds and where issues related to alienation, even radicalisation, of young people are a growing concern.

Secondly, research into young people's perceptions of how the problems of extremism and terrorism can be addressed could potentially also prove very useful. Such research might prove useful with private and state schools and madrassa students in Pakistan and also with school pupils in multicultural countries like the UK. Such research, like my study, could potentially acknowledge young people's agency and give them a voice in how school curricula should be re-designed to address these pressing matters. These aims can only be brought to fruition if the findings of the research are taken on board by the policy makers.

Thirdly, researching teachers' constructions of how young people can be encouraged to learn about issues like politics, democracy, and combating extremism is very important. This is because teachers are key stakeholders in the institution of education and no one knows the dynamics of classrooms and learning as closely as the teachers. Stenhouse (1981: 109) makes a powerful case for 'placing teachers at the heart of educational research process'. This research could potentially be very usefully conducted with teachers in private and state schools in Pakistan, and with teachers in schools in Western liberal democracies. The findings of such research could usefully inform the education of trainee teachers and the continuous professional development programmes for existing practitioners.

Notwithstanding the potential usefulness of future research projects identified in this section, one must be cognizant of the fact that research, no matter how insightful, can never bring about the envisaged change, unless it is read, and the implications and/or recommendations are taken into account in devising policies and practices.

10.5 End Word

The suggestions I have made about changing school curricula and educating teachers to equip them with relevant professional skills and conducting further research into young people's and teachers constructions of international affairs and how to tackle prejudice, extremism and militancy can only play a marginal role in changing Pakistan or the wider world. It will do little to address the very serious issues discussed in this thesis – a world increasingly divided along the lines of economic prosperity, culture

and religion and a growing sense of resentment felt by a very large number of disenfranchised people against the policies and actions of the rich and powerful countries of the world. Durrant's (1929/1981: 247) pessimistic appraisal of human civilisation in the aftermath of the World War I, indeed, rings true for us in the second decade of the 21st century:

...men discovered how precariously thin their coat of civilization was, how insecure their security, and how frail their freedom...The idea of progress seemed now to be one of the shallowest delusions that had ever mocked man's misery, or lifted him up to a vain idealism and a colossal futility.

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Appendix

A Topic Guide for Focus Group with Young People

Total Duration: 1 hour

- Introduction of the Research
- Individual Introductions: Tell me your names and something you really enjoy doing in your free time.
- Do you know what happened on September 11, 2001 in the United States? In your opinion why were the attacks made?
- What do you think of the way America reacted to 9/11?
- Do you think it was reasonable for America to attack Afghanistan & Iraq to root out terrorism from the world? (This could be kept as an optional follow up to the previous question.)
- What are your views on the international war on terror? Who is this war against?
- What do you think of the way Pakistan has played its role in the war on terror since 9/11?
- In your opinion what were the factors that led to the assassination of Benazir Bhutto?
- How can the world be made a safer and more peaceful place?
- Would any of you like to add anything that you feel is important and hasn't been said so far concerning the issues discussed in this session?
- This was a discussion about how young people like you feel about the current international situation. Have we missed out any important thing that we should have talked about?

Complete Transcript of Focus Group 4

Saeed (M): My name is Saeed Zulfiqar and I am A1 student. And my hobbies are reading books and playing video games and surfing.

Naveed: Ok, alright.

Zoya (F): I am Zoya Akram – an A1 student. My hobbies are basically reading or, umm, what's surfing programmes I enjoy. And, yeah, literature is one of my greatest interests (laughs).

Naveed: Ok, do you have literature in A-level?

Zoya (F): Yeah, I do, I do.

Naveed: Alright, that's great.

Komal (F): My name is Komal Zahid. I am an A1 student. And, basically, hobbies include music and staying in touch with current affairs.

Farah (F): My name is Farah Zamir. I am also an A1 student. My hobbies are writing – I absolutely love writing – and again reading, and besides that I love music and obviously current affairs.

Naveed: Ok.

Adil (M): I am Adil Shah. I am in AS. My hobbies include, basically, football – watching, playing – and reading as well.

Naveed: What kinds of books do you like reading?

Adil (M): Basically non-fiction.

Naveed: Alright. I now begin with the first question that focuses on the work that I am doing. Do you know what happened on September 11, 2001 in the United States?

Everyone: Yes.

Naveed: And in your opinion why did it happen?

Komal (F): It's a very long story.

Naveed: Can you briefly tell me what happened?

Komal (F): It probably started as after, post Afghanistan and Russian war. You had Taliban, you had an upcoming terrorist group, breeding in the Arab countries, and who had a very influential leader, and they had the specific aim of destabilizing the West.

Naveed: They had a strong leader – you mean the Taliban?

Komal (F): Al-Qaeda.

Naveed: Al-Qaeda.

Komal (F): Al-Qaeda has been breeding in the Arab countries.

Naveed: Ok.

Komal (F): And they found another militant group that had similar aims, similar mission statement – the Taliban. So, you had two militant groups – Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. And...you can't say combined, but they had similar views and similar points, they followed similar conservative thinking – narrow thinking. And they channeled all that through the funds, the thinking, the aims and mission and you had 9/11 and other events – other terrorist attacks. You could have Afghanistan, you could have other Arab countries who had their differences with the Western world. So, these militant groups take these groups take these differences personally and make it their aim to...if the government is not fighting for the wrong that the West is doing, they make it their aim to do it themselves – and they do it by hook or by crook. And they have no limits – terrorism has no boundaries, it has no limits, it has no borders. So, there are people...the militant group is breeding in the Arab world, and they attack the Western world. You can see how influential and widespread they are, and how operational they are. They were able to conduct the second attack and successfully.

Naveed: Anyone else?

Saeed (M): I think it is part of a long conspiracy. And it's that first the USA fed these Taliban during that Russian war and they invested on Taliban, made them extremists. And it's because they wanted to come in this region – Middle East. And as a part of this conspiracy, 2001 they did this thing – they did this attack on themselves and made it an excuse to come in this region. And, I am not sure which source, but I read it that 48% US citizens – Americans believe that it was America that did this attack. And internet is filled with documentaries that US did it themselves. So, I think it is part of a long conspiracy. And I think Pakistan is going to be the next target.

Naveed: Quite a different view from what Komal has said.

Komal (F): Another thing is that the day 9/11 happened, the newspapers printed that around 93,000 Jews were not in the world trade centre – they were on a national holiday – that's what the newspapers said. It's not a coincidence that 93,000 people are not coming to work on one single day.

Farah (F): Also keep in mind that the world trade centre was bought by a Jew just a few days back, before the attack.

Adil (M): But I think, I do not believe in conspiracies – it would have been very hard to carry out an attack of this scale without a leak of some kind. So, I think it pointless to assume that it was a conspiracy. I think it was done by Al-Qaeda but the reasons were just not justified.

Naveed: So, what do you think were the reasons?

Adil (M): It was basically their kind of revenge. They wanted America's cultural imperialism that goes on around the world and we all know it is the only super power for the past so many years. It was kind of grudge they had after the Russian war in Afghanistan – it was totally destroyed – I think it was sort of a revenge but totally unjustified.

Naveed: Totally unjustified?

Adil (M): Yes.

Zoya (F): I would say the same, definitely – not justified, even if, I mean, umm, whatever the Western world does to you, you have no right to go and kill so many innocent citizens, just for no reason at all. I mean, for personal revenge, even if, umm, the US comes and kills 3000 of your people, it is not justified to go and kill tens of thousands of theirs in such a senseless act of –

Komal (F): The only way the Western world or Taliban or Al-Qaeda justify their acts is because the US and the West – the US – because we're talking about 9/11 – they've had a strategy that whenever they don't have an excuse for doing anything, for example, they had the Afghan war, they have an excuse that it is their self-interest. Every country has the right to protect their self-interest, and their interest at that time was to support the Taliban; now it's to go against them.

The Taliban and the Al-Qaeda have used the same strategy – you see their recorded tapes or messages or emails or any other letters that they send, they have the same, you can say, policy that they're protecting the self-interest of Islam – Islam – they are showing Islam or their culture as their interest – that we're protecting our interest. So you can't say we're wrong we are justified as long as we are protecting our interest, just like the US was doing it, just like as any other European nation or the Western World does it, so we're doing the same thing. It's justified from their end because they're sitting on the other table, on the other end of the table. But it's obviously not justified – killing is never justified.

Naveed: Is that all you have to say about this? [pause] What do you think of the way America reacted to 9/11?

Zoya (F): I'd say it was in their own way, perhaps, quite not justified. Umm, actually, umm, it was the way, I mean all that, umm, projection against so called terrorists – all that rounding up of...of so called terrorists. I mean, for instance, the target of – a lot of it was Muslims after that since Al-Qaeda and Taliban were the suspected – the main suspects – the prime suspects. Umm, you can't just round up – if you just round up a thousand Muslims, umm, with no proof and you're not giving them any chance to justify themselves, then, umm, you're actually, I think, that's a way of getting ready made recruits for the Al-Qaeda and Taliban because that would turn their hearts against, umm, the Western world, right? And that would perhaps, umm, all those families that are affected by all those rounding ups and everything, I think, umm, they would actually be in sympathy more with...anti-Western groups than the West themselves. So, I think, it is their way of, umm, for example, trying to tackle the situation. I don't think that is wise way to do it.

Adil (M): I think they are planning to say the least – what they did was probably good for the short term. For the long term, it's only three years and [unintelligible] the situation has become tense even further. I think for the next fifty years the world politics will be defined by the two attacks – one in Afghanistan and the other in Iraq. The whole region would be destabilized for the coming so many years, just because – I think they panicked because they had reason to panic as well because if they did not do anything about it, they probably would have skinned them alive.

Naveed: Any further thoughts about the way they reacted.

Saeed (M): I think it was a conspiracy and America knew what it will do. I remember that just after one or two hours the news was on that Osama bin Laden did that – without any evidence, without any thing, it was Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Osama bin Laden did it. They already knew that this going to happen, I mean they had planned it and they knew what their reaction would be.

Komal (F): There is a big air or cloud of confusion as well, surrounding the entire situation. There is no direct sense of direction as to what they should do. But instead of fixing their own leakages, they started blaming other count...other militant groups. Of course you have your suspects, you have your evidence that supports the fact, you know, that a certain somebody did it, but you are supposed to correct yourself as well! You still have leakages in the CIA, in the FBI. US spends 40 million dollars each year on this intelligence service – half of this the country, the world does not know of – 40 million dollars go to service, secret service. And they couldn't find out a simple attack?! Not a simple attack – 9/11 – attack on the Pentagon, the plane that was shot down in Pennsylvania – three attacks on the same day. 40 million dollars gone waste because you couldn't even determine an attack – even suspect an attack. So, it's all, if...you need a sense of direction and that wasn't there. Post-9/11 at least for let's say up to Afghanistan war – still there is no sense of direction – they still don't know where they're going – they don't know where they're going. The American people themselves don't know where their government is going, what are their plans. So, it's – there is an air of confusion, air of conspiracy, they don't have any clear facts as to what, they said that Muslims – indicated that – everyone agrees that after a few hours of the attack the news circulated – the television stated that it was Al-Qaeda. What's your proof?! When you report something you have to have proof for that. Even when the government says something, even when the state says something you need proof for that. And that proof – just because a person is a suspect, you make that person a criminal that's not justice to anybody, anywhere.

Naveed: Do you think it was reasonable for America to first attack Afghanistan and then Iraq?

Farah (F): Absolutely not. If you are fighting against terrorism it does not mean that you spread terrorism. Afghanistan – the economy, everything in Afghanistan has been destroyed because of the attack – they said that the suspects are the Taliban and Osama bin Laden – it's not justified that for that you kill innocent – millions of innocent lives, and it's not just lives, it's the country, the economy, the development they've had. Now where is Afghanistan? They will have to start from scratch. Where is Iraq? Where is Iran? There is no development going on – they've gone back in time, way back in time. And just because of Al-Qaeda, it's a war for peace. Now, that I feel is an extremely absurd, umm, statement that they have a war for peace – peace is not supposed to be associated with war. And Americans', Americans' reaction to that particular incident, by raging war against countries and that also purely Islamic countries. We feel that absolutely unjustified.

Komal (F): Secondly, post-American attack in Afghanistan – the only reason Afghanistan is still running or still has food in people's houses or any other thing because Afghanistan is the highest opium producer in the world. And we have – the only reason is that drugs are supporting the economy, it's the highest support, opium producer in the world [Naveed: hmm]. So, even the support that you are getting from the economy or from what you do in the country that's not good. They're growing drugs to support the economy – that's not justified.

Adil (M): I would be the last one to refrain from America bashing but I think they had no option really. I mean, just imagine that they had not attacked Afghanistan or Iraq. Right now Saddam Hussain in Iraq and Taliban in Afghanistan – we all know that Taliban right now, even after all the losses that they suffered they are so strong that they are basically the pain in the neck of two governments. The Pakistani government is so [unintelligible] and they still can't tackle them. And in the south Afghanistan – it belongs to them. So, I think it's a war that could have been better planned, it could have been better executed, but it was a war that was inevitable, especially the Afghanistan war. But, I think, the Iraq war it could have been...there could have been other ways to do that – the regime change – Saddam Hussain – it could have been done in a very better and a very peaceful way.

Farah (F): And again if you are tracking down criminals, I feel it is absolutely unjustified to attack countries for that. If you are tracking down criminals does not mean that you have to slay innocent lives for that – that's absolutely unjustified. If America is voicing its opinion about human rights and all that it should definitely also keep in mind that a country should not violate human rights of any other nation in the world either. If human rights had been destroyed in that 9/11 attack it does not mean that countries have to be destroyed. You have to track down the criminals – you don't have to slay innocent peoples. You don't have to destroy families. You don't have to make people cry and suffer for what happened to a group of people and that was because of a particular group. That's absolutely unjustified.

Komal (F): One thing that the US troops in Afghanistan did they broke the back of the Taliban. The Taliban spread over the Arab countries, in Pakistan – they went...they went out of Afghanistan and spread all over the Arab countries. Just as Adil said for the short term it was a good move because you were able to break down the Taliban and you were in control of a country that was totally terrorist country so said by the US media or other media organizations around the world, the governments around the world even our Arab – Muslim countries also admitted that. So, for the time being it did some good but the aftermath was terrible! You had Iraq, you had Pakistan, you had bombings even during those invasions in Iraq & Afghanistan, bombings never stopped in Madrid or in London or in Pakistan or in any other place. So it did continue; for a short time you had – you had victory for a short time because you thought you had done the right thing. But in the long term what happened postwar alliance or what happened immediately, umm, after let's say Iraq was attacked that was terrible. It was not planned and you had unexpected events happening almost on daily basis everywhere – it's not just limited to one country, it's influencing millions of miles away.

Troops are in Iraq but you have bombing in Madrid, you have bombings in London, troops are in Iran, you have bombings let's say in Pakistan. So, the burden is shifted towards – on the whole world – nobody is safe any more. [Naveed: hmm] Nobody was safe any more before as well, but still you knew that at least you had some sense of security. At least I won't be bombed because of no reason; now you can still be bombed because of no reason.

[Naveed: hmm] If terrorists can bomb a group of doctors – a bus of doctors in Pakistan – if they can blow up nursing tents in Afghanistan – students, teachers nobody is – doctors are supposed to be the last – they're not supposed to be the victims of war, they are not supposed to attack them. But when they are attacked in such huge numbers everywhere – in Pakistan, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, nobody else is left. They're just like – they're as vulnerable as another Muslim or another terrorist. So differentiation finishes that moment, when you start killing randomly people – anybody – if you're a soldier, if you're a doctor, if you're a child, if you're a mother – anybody – so the differentiation is not anymore there. You become insensitive. Human rights are of course violated, your morals change, your civil liberties change as well because your thinking has changed, your mentality has changed. Now, you have post-9/11 more stricter rules on Muslims. Now the mentality has changed so much that even if I am applying to the US, I'll probably think twice – will I be able to study, will I have the capacity to have my space to study – I am a student, I am not a terrorist, I am not an extremist but I could be looked upon as one so I have to cover all those aspects because of two invasions to two other countries – it affects everybody.

Saeed (M): And, I think, this war has empowered the Taliban even more because now there are many people – there are people who really hated America though now they support Taliban fully. And the Taliban I don't know from where they are getting more weapons. There is no evidence of their getting less powerful, especially nowadays in Pakistan.

Naveed: So, do you really think in the short term it has really been effective?

Komal (F): It broke the back of Taliban, so it is effective for the short term. But if you just see Afghanistan, yes, Taliban were literally driven out of Afghanistan. But for the short term Afghanistan itself was perceived to be safe everywhere, because it broke the back of the Taliban. It didn't have terrorists – we knew they weren't there but this spread out to other countries.

Naveed: So, it dispersed them rather than breaking their backs?

Komal (F): Yes.

Zoya: On the short term basis it was much more profitable for America –

Naveed: What do you mean by 'profitable'?

Zoya (F): As in it was a lot more, umm, supported them in a way that the terrorists had spread out and all that but the fact was that the country was destroyed. Yes, you can say that they broke the power of the Taliban. That threat that Afghanistan posed to them had lessened but the threat they posed to Afghanistan, to the neighbouring countries had increased by manifolds. So, in the short term, yes, it was effective for America in a good way, not for the Muslim countries, not for the neighbouring countries. And in the long term everyone saw the effects – these were not hidden from anyone.

Adil (M): I think if you look at it from the point of view of the US citizens there was no major terrorist incident in USA after 9/11. So, they are pretty much satisfied that, yeah, our security is pretty much okay right now. But what I think that the war in Iraq and Afghanistan did was basically – the war was basically between the extremists and Americans but now it is a war between the West and Islam. So that pretty much sums it up that it is now us versus them.

Komal (F): They've raised the war to the next level. And, just yesterday you had you had – after all this – after two invasions, the attacks – all that, six people had been convicted of being involved in 9/11 case. They've been given – the prosecution thinks they should be given the death penalty. Now death penalties, possibly, they are abolished throughout Europe, except for Russia and few other countries. So, as the largest – the second largest democracy – I think they call the US, and it's the most powerful nation in the world – it's got veto power – it's the superpower. And, that is the place they are taking death penalty – the prosecution is going to prosecute the case, basis, basis – based on the fact that they will be prosecuted on death penalty. Now, I am not really sure what, umm, laws & regulations are for war crimes or other terrorist attacks, but without evidence, the first thing you come on Sun TV that it is going to be death penalty. That's not right! They're not sentenced as yet – their trials have to go on and on for the next six or eight months. This is the starting period and you are breeding in people's minds that it is going to be death penalty – eventually, we will kill them, don't worry. So, where is your justice, where are your natural principles of justice. It's all lost, it's all in the air – it's all on paper, there's nothing in action – all this is blurry, there is no substance. It focuses on the basic thing which is easier said than done, but of course in the end they do do it.

Naveed: So, generally speaking what do you think is happening in the world?

Zoya (F): Things are lot worse than they were. I mean the spread of terrorism has been profound, before that, umm, of course there has been terrorism – there has always been terrorism – but it has multiplied after that. It's almost as if it has set a trend for terrorism.

Komal (F): Looks like there is nothing safe in the world – not even your own home, not even your own town – is Rawalpindi safe after Benazir's assassination? No it is not! Is Pakistan safe? No it is not! Is any country in the world safe now? No it is not!

Zoya (F): Rawalpindi was the sleeping town – the sleeping town – now we have bomb blasts.

Adil (M): I think, we as Pakistanis feel it the worst. I don't know, the rest of the world is treating us fine, but as we are going through such trauma, recently, I think our views would be very much different.

Komal (F): No it's not just us, even the London bombings. Is London safe now? It's not!

Adil (M): The occurrence level is different – we have two in a week and they have one in a year.

Komal (F): That's more than enough for them – more than enough to terrorize them.

Adil (M): Their lives are more important than our lives?

Komal (F): No, I am not saying that. I'm just saying that just one terrorist attack in London has a profound effect on everyone there. And over here we know there is election going on, we will have terrorism.

Farah (F): It's not about the frequency and the number of terrorist attacks – even one terrorist attack, I mean, it is hell for those who experience it. There is no sense of security – it's threatened. That's a basic human right and you've taken that away. That's not at all something that can be justified to do to defend your own self.

Zoya (F): It's a big attack on civil liberty.

Adil (M): It's pretty much selective, like only Pakistan has to bear the brunt of it all, like Iraq and Afghanistan. Besides that, I don't know, we never hear that there is a bombing in Dubai or there is a bombing in India which has been done by terrorists. I think, basically, it is a very difficult thing to decide that what's behind this. And Pakistan supported Taliban during the Russian war and now it is the biggest target. So there is more to it than meets the eye. And for ordinary people like us it is very difficult to understand what's going on.

Komal (F): Can't we – be able to balance out – actually how we can protect civil liberties and still have a foreign policy that does not include attacking other people? Now it is all about self interest. If my self interest is to be with Farah, I'll try being with her. If my self interest is to, later on, after two days, not be with her, I won't even...I'll probably do whatever it takes to hurt her, or, you know, damage her. So, it's all about self-interest, it's all about your foreign policy – how you follow it, how you pursue it. So, every country has one excuse – every nation in the world uses it – that we have the right to protect our self-interest – that's where we draw the line – there can be no discussion on it. You can't discuss it with somebody with such a closed and selfish mind. My self interest is to go and invade Iraq, I'll do that!

Farah (F): Even if the UN does not allow you to do it –

Komal (F): Exactly, I don't care if you like it or not. I don't care if it kills millions of other people, just in the neighbouring country – I don't care! It's just my self-interest!

Farah (F): You are just saving yourself no matter at the expense of how many others – you just don't care. It's just – you save yourself.

Komal (F): The American lives are worth more than just normal human lives anywhere in the world. Especially, if you are a Muslim your self-worth even reduces much more.

Adil (M): As a Pakistani I would like to say that we tend to forget the fact that Pakistan was a very booming economy during the 1970s and after that we couldn't recover from the loss of Bangladesh. But then, you see, we tend to forget that India has been our number one enemy, and it will be our number one enemy despite whatever we think it is. Secondly, the number of Indian consulates along the Pakistan-Afghan border is beyond belief. There are like six/seven Indian consulates right next to our border to Afghanistan. What I am going to say is that someone could be using Taliban here – could be using Taliban to destabilize Pakistan. It could be India, it could be somebody else. But, I don't know, just because they're radical and fundamental – they've not become radical and fundamental overnight. I think, there is something that is motivating them – it's probably money – I don't know, there is some hand in the attacks which we cannot, umm, find out. There are terrorists there but there is something else as well.

Komal (F): There is a missing piece of the puzzle that we can't find. People can't identify that – there is a missing piece in the puzzle.

Adil (M): Here the Chinese engineers are getting abducted, and they're getting kidnapped, and they're getting killed. I don't know what Chinese engineers have got to do with terrorism. I mean, they're such a peace loving country, at least what we think of them. I think that should be an eye opener for us that we should realize that there is

something else going on. I mean Chinese engineers should not be a target for terrorism. And we like for Gwadar, we always hear that there is something fishy going on. As we probably know Gwadar would open up a lot of opportunities for Pakistan trade wise, port wise, import-export wise. So, I think, if we see a little deeper, we should realize that there is something going on, which we cannot decipher.

Farah (F): Gwadar also threatens the ports and the trading industry in the Arab countries as well.

Adil (M): Yes, that's true.

Farah (F): So, you can see a clear motivator there. So, there are lots of people not wanting us to prosper.

Adil (M): True. That's the point – they want their own people to prosper. If Pakistan meets Iran they'll probably say they are Muslims and all that. But, I don't think it's that way anymore, if they are Muslims or Christians or Jews. They don't care – if they are allies – you are an ally but if you are not then you are not.

Naveed: What do you think of Pakistan's role in international conflicts since 9/11?

Komal (F): I think most of us didn't have a choice.

Adil (M): Yeah, true.

Komal (F): We were told to do something – we never had any choice. It's like, when, either it was to be with the US or be at the expense of the US. So, most people criticize the Musharraf regime for supporting the war on terror. But if you see it from a distant view you see that you didn't have any choice. If you don't support them, they will draw in troops in your country – they don't need your permission. But, sort of we can say that we have an option, a chance that if you don't support us we might just kill you or bomb your country or you know devastate your economy. But if you do – if you don't we'll do all that. And there is no stopping them. And so we didn't have any option to stop that. We didn't have any option; I mean, other than to be pro-US. Of course it is not in our best interest to be that and go against our long-term allies, but sometimes you have to do some things because in the short-term period, you just have to do them. And for the short-term, it seems the right thing to do. But again, in the long-term, it is turning out to be chaos for the country.

Adil (M): Even in the long-term if we, like seven years from now, suddenly back from now, we could have never have imagined an insurgency of this level at least. I mean for

a person like me at least, I would not consider the Taliban – a small terrorist organization – not an organization that could dare to attack places like the GHQ, like they try to kill, try to assassinate Benazir. They – we’ve always underestimated the threat of Taliban. So, basically that led to our downfall. I think what we did was right – supporting America – we had no option. But right now the current political situation – it was all on the cards basically. This was bound to happen.

Komal (F): Certain people also believe that the US is trying to destabilize Pakistan that they will be able to draw in troops. You have presidential candidates in their foreign policy strategies stating they will draw out troops from Iraq into Pakistan. So, that clearly shows you what the mentality is. Even somebody running for the White House, even though he is not President, he still thinks that the right thing to do after getting into the White House is to draw troops in Pakistan and get them out of Iraq and Afghanistan. There is no difference between the Republicans and the Democrats – it’s the same thinking all over. And it takes a lot, a lot and it takes a lot to change that thinking – that attacking is not a solution to your problems. It’ll just increase our problems much more and problems for similar countries face like we do.

Adil (M): I somehow would have no problem with US troops coming to Pakistan – I mean not attacking Pakistan but having troops in Pakistan – because our troops are getting killed for their war. So, I mean it would be better if they come in as well and they could get a first hand experience of what’s going on here. So, I think, it’s pretty much okay with me. I mean we talk about Pakistan’s sovereignty and all that, I don’t think there has been any sovereignty over the Tribal Areas ever in the fifty or sixty years of our independence. So, I think, it’s basically, umm, when we try to make peace with them, America does not agree, we make war with them we suffer the losses. So, I think the, I think, just let them come in. I don’t know if our people think, okay America is coming to Pakistan and we are no more a sovereign country –

Komal (F): We are not patriotic enough to defend ourselves – and we are [inaudible] but, you know, times have changed and let them come in and fight their own war. Of course it’s not going to be, of course it’s not going to be nice, it’s not going to be beautiful – it’s going to be very ugly. I think, it’s time they should come and fight their own war. We’re done, we’re out of troops, we’re out of money, we’re out of – we’re not out of money – they still fund us, but we’re out of the moral support that we had from our country before to fight their war. Enough for us!

Zoya (F): I think, it’s the whole cycle of suffering. I mean, we suffer either way. We support them – how you suffer by supporting them is see all these religious groups within your own country are threatening your own security. Why are they against the government? They say the government is pro-American. So, they target the innocent people, just to influence the government, right? And if you turn anti-American, then Americans will come in and threaten your security again. So, I think, you suffer either ways.

Komal (F): And you do not have the politicians or a setup that would actually be able to balance the two. We don't have any politicians, we don't even have a setup as such if we have such a situation, if we have such a crisis situation, how do we balance it? How do we make sure that we do not crumble – we don't have that – we have crumbling everywhere?

Naveed: How can that be achieved? How can that be balanced?

Adil (M): I think the lack of leadership after Quaid-e-Azam (This is the title given to Mohammad Ali Jinnah by the people of Pakistan. Jinnah was the political leader who spearheaded the movement for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the United India.) has been the factor. There has never been anyone who could unite the, you know, four provinces together. Basically, I think the problem of the four provinces staying together is overstated. People use it to derive political rhetoric from it. And secondly, I would like to say that we – the irony of all this is that we are really a moderate nation – Sindhis, Punjabis (the people living in two of the four provinces of Pakistan) basically, are very moderate people. The problem lies here...in the North – that's where we should concentrate. I think, besides that people like you and me, we don't go around, kill Americans just for fun. That's the irony – we're being portrayed as a very radical nation here, which basically hurts someone who knows that more than like 70 to 80% people living here are moderates. And they are not after any religion or sect or anything else.

Farah (F): I think basically you need to increase the basic qualification level for being an MNA (Member of the National Assembly) – just have to be a BA [laughs]. You at least actually need to have a better mental educated level.

Adil (M): I think, people will make fake degrees once more.

Naveed: But that too is a recent phenomenon – the legislation requiring to be at least BA to contest for elections.

Adil (M): I don't think it really made any difference.

Naveed: So, what do you think of Benazir's assassination?

Saeed (M): First I thought it's okay. But what happened afterwards, I said no, it's not okay.

Zoya (F): Absolutely not! It was never okay. The first thing, it was unfortunate, unjustified –

Komal (F): You talk about democracy over here and you see a candidate – a democratic candidate standing for presidential elections – absolutely unjustified. That's the worst form of extremism you can ever see in Pakistan.

Adil (M): I think, I for one was not a very big Benazir fan. All her antics really proved her a [inaudible]. But the fact that...what I thought about the [unintelligible] okay, you know, she did some things in the past. But what I think that basically Benazir's assassination tells us that there is more to the terrorism factor – Baitullah Mehsud, who was the supposed murderer has denied two, three times on live TV. So, we don't know where we are going right now – If even our national leader is not safe – she was, like it or not, our national icon. She had the most contacts in the West; she was the one who portrayed Pakistan's image in a very positive way, I would say here. So, we lost her and we lost a lot of other things as well.

Naveed: Any further thoughts on that?

Komal (F): She's probably responsible for her death as well – living not in the country and giving statements outside. For example, a couple of statements – ones that I'll allow once I am the President and Prime Minister – I'm not sure – but when I'm part of the government, I'll allow US troops to draw in, in Pakistan. That's, you know, it probably makes Bush administration pretty happy, but not our people, not the Taliban, not the – any militant group – any patriotic Pakistani will not like that. Second, second aim that once she is again in power she'll make sure that Dr. A. Q. Khan [Pakistan's iconic nuclear scientist, who is considered to be the brain behind Pakistan becoming a nuclear power. He has also become greatly controversial in the recent years due to his alleged role in selling nuclear technology to other countries like Iran.] is handed over to the IAEA.

So, all of these are – of course these are her personal opinions, but it gives you more or less a rough idea of what the policy of the person will be once the person is in power. So you start rethinking is it the right person or not. And is this the person who should be a target or not. Then also she – important is – she brought it upon herself as well. If you know you are a target – she knew she was a target – so, probably, should have given, let's say, moderate statements, and not said out aloud that I will allow – literally I will allow troops draw in Pakistan; I will hand over A.Q. Khan to IAEA, and help the international inspectors to protect the nukes of Pakistan. All of this is, I don't say they are unpatriotic, but not a PPP [Pakistan Peoples Party – Pakistan's major political party, founded by Benazir's father and of which Benazir was the Chairperson till her death] stand, but this may be the resentment against her.

Adil (M): I think, basically, she was at least being honest there. I mean, we all know for a fact that we have to get in power in Pakistan, you are either pro-establishment or you have links with the USA. Besides that you can't come into power. So, I think she

was at least being honest in admitting she would do those things. I mean, for example, if PML-Q [another political party comprising a group of politicians who supported the military President Musharraf, and which was in power for many years till the recent general elections] comes to power again – they would do the same things. It's because they are not the ones who are going to do the shots here, it's the agencies, it's the establishment who are the stuff. So, basically, she was just being honest when she said all these things.

Komal (F): She was being brutally honest with herself. Could have been the timing of the statement was probably not right – could have said later on. Could have said when she was here – but before coming, and, you know, there is resentment against you – potential resentment, which could cost you a lot. It's always better to be a bit cautious about it, but she was daring enough –

Adil (M): That was what I was telling Komal. Benazir for once knew that she was going to be targeted – she nearly got killed. But then that tells a lot about the woman herself that she was brave enough to come and look into the eye of the murderer. Centralizing the A. Q. Khan issue here, I think we all are very emotional people and we tend to think of him as a hero. But what he did was that he gave the nuclear technology to Libya, North Korea and Iran. I think, umm, Iran and Libya are, probably, justified because they are Muslim count – Muslim brothers. But North Korea was, it was purely – I think it was a very bad thing. And even for a person who is nationalist and patriotic like me, that is not on – it shouldn't have been done!

Naveed: And do you think the world can be made a more peaceful and a better place to be in? Can we make the world safer and more peaceful for everyone? Is there a way?

Adil: I wish we could. I wish we could.

Komal (F): That would require a very drastic change in mindsets – a very big change in mindsets that is at the moment impossible to achieve. You require a lot of –

Naveed: Could you elaborate you elaborate on that?

Komal (F): See, you have to change the mindset – you know the mindset about terrorism, about democracy, about human rights, about what is right and what is wrong – drawing the line on the right point. That is what countries need to differentiate – they need figure out that. And, obviously, we all have our pre-defined morals and our predefined cultures and traditions and we're going to go on with that. As Muslims, we will be very emotional towards, umm, very, very sorry –

Zoya (F): Towards any attack.

Komal (F): Yes, towards any attack – yes we will be. Still it requires a lot of, lot of, a lot of encouragement and lot of counselling, a lot of hard work to change the mindset. Once the mindsets have been changed –

Naveed: Mindsets of whom?

Komal (F): Mindsets of the veto-powers, of countries in general about – Al-Qaeda's mindset, America's mindset about Muslim nations, Muslims' mindset about the West. A lot of change in mindsets is required.

Adil (M): I think it is high time we should reconcile with the fact that terrorists are there. And, I think, it is proven by the last two, three years we cannot defeat them through war. But other thing is that Pakistan's internal crisis that is the political crisis, until and unless that is solved, because, umm, you know, it is so, the situation is so murky that we do not realize that who is our friend and who is our enemy. Right now the next government – I don't know what their agenda would be to tackle the Taliban. The only way, I think, we can proceed is through peace with the Taliban. Umm, whenever we try to make that something in-between happens, like there are some bombings. I think the only way we can progress as a nation is through a revolution. And I'm very sorry to say it has to be bloody, it has to be something that France experienced. And, well, it is the only option we are left with, right now.

Komal (F): We have to get to achieve a world peace order. We'll have to sacrifice a lot to achieve it.

Farah (F): You pointed out talking to them instead of fighting with them. But that one also, again we don't see eye to eye – we don't see in the same way because there was a show on BBC – we had a live audience, and they had polling as well. And about 68% of all Arab citizens feel that talking to the Taliban is not the solution to the problem. And fighting them and defeating them physically is the solution. Again even changing the mindsets – the way how you change the mindsets, you can't agree on that as well. How you do that, how you don't do that – you can't agree on that. Probably you need another 50 years to do that or something.

Adil (M): I think, the Arab states will not realize what kind of situation we are in. I think, we need to come to terms with the fact that Pakistan is increasingly becoming a very volatile place to live in. We do not imagine comparing – people comparing us to Iraq. We would laugh at Iraq, a year ago – oh my God another bombing today, uh, uh – stuff like that. But now, I think, we need to come to terms with the fact that it is there, and it will be there, until and unless we do something about it! Now we as the youth can do nothing because I am very sorry to say what our parents' generation did was basically nothing. So, I think, I don't know, umm, there has to be a revolution here. What the revolution should be motivated about is, I think, democracy, because democracy would kill everything that is there right now. Democracy would empower the youth. Without democracy we can do nothing – we would start protesting on the streets, people would lock us up – we can do nothing about it. It is the power makers who have the power to do that.

Saeed (M): I think, what we truly need is a true leader – the right leader, who can really guide us. Like, we don't need Zardari (the husband of Benazir Bhutto, who became the co-chairman of the Pakistan People's Party after her assassination). I heard the news that he's going to be the next Prime Minister of Pakistan. We need a programme. We need a true – a true leader like Imam Khomeini (the Iranian spiritual leader who spearheaded the Iranian revolution of the 1970s) did bring the revolution in Iran, we need the same thing in Pakistan. In Pakistan everyone is so divided that it almost seems impossible – on basis of religion, on basis of trust and everything, on basis of culture – everything is different.

Komal (F): I think, Pakistan is not ready for true democracy because the definition of democracy is here I'll pay 1500 you vote for me, I pay 2000 you vote for me too. First of all you have to change people who are actually talking about democracy. They need to know how you, let's say, exactly, what is [unintelligible], what is democracy and how you make sure that people – it is a true democracy. One pays somebody to vote for me – that's not democracy!

In Pakistan, 70% of our population lives in the rural areas. There you have queues of – record out numbers, let's say, for the polling. It's because they have increased 1500 to 2000 for voting for one person. And because you have record turnout it's not because people believe in their leader, it's because they can have their money to feed their children! And secondly, you just said change the mindset, we can't, even our generation, let's say five generations down the lane, they probably won't be able to do it, because it takes, yes the example of Australia, the Prime Minister gave an apology for having laws against native Australians, I don't remember their [Adil (M): The aborigine.] yes the aborigines. So, after 50 years, almost about 50 to 60 years now the apology comes, not even compensation, not even solution to the problem.

So, it takes years and years. Just like you had, now we have a fight between religions. Back in the 1970s, you had a fight between the colour of your skin. That took a lot of time as well. It took a lot of time for a black African American to be in the Congress or to be in the Senate. So, all of that takes years and years to happen. And changing mindsets is not an easy thing, it takes, you know, it requires a lot of skill, you need to have, umm, you need to convince the person, not suppress the person – just agree with me. You need to have daring rulers for that.

Naveed: And how do we get those?

Komal (F): I think, the youth should be encouraged to go into politics, because right now none present here would be interested in being the Prime Minister, even standing for elections at the district level.

Farah (F): Even if we do, we have so many de-motivating factors –

Naveed: For example what?

Farah (F): For example, you have –

Adil (F): You need to understand that in Pakistan politics has always been the dirty man's play. For, for like in a constituency the 5-6 people who are applying for the seat,

I think, all of them would have spent a lot of time in jails. They would have spent their youth fighting with people – with drugs, involved in mafias. I think, that's the problem, if the National Assembly is full of criminals, then how the hell you suppose that you're going to run a country in very smooth manner. Secondly, I would like to disagree with what Komal said where she thinks democracy is not yet Pakistan's, umm, answers to our problems. I think, it's sixty years since, we were, we were born. And, I don't think so, I think it's very nice excuse to say we're divided along lines, along lines of culture, lines along provinces, we have four different – their reputation says that Pakistan is basically four bulls tied with their tails together. I think there are worse cases. India has like so many provinces. America has so many different races and cultures. Spain, France they're like the leading economies of the world, yet they, there are movements which want to break away the country, but still they are progressing. I think it's no longer an excuse that democracy doesn't work in Pakistan and we are divided along sectarian lines. I think, basically, what's hampering the growth is basically us! It's us that we are not getting empowered.

Naveed: All right anything else?

Komal (F): I think we need lot more leaders like Ahmedinejad in different countries of the world – the person is daring enough [laughs] to write letters to America to accept Islam. We need daring leaders like that plus motivation, who know how to, umm, actually take trust of the people in their hands – we need leaders like those.

Naveed: But you said, initially you said that we need to change mindsets. (Komal (F): Yeah.) But on the other hand Ahmedinejad is an icon of one very hard-line man in the Islamic world. So, don't you think there is a contradiction there?

Komal (F): I was actually talking about the daring of the person – the person's motivation, courage.

Naveed: Okay.

Komal (F): Changing the mindsets is a very long task. It's not going to be done in ten years, not even fifty years, because it is a very long process. And all of us really, really need to work towards it. Until and unless there is a motivation in any of us in Pakistan,

any youth in Pakistan, mindsets are not going to be changed. And until and unless the government also actually pressurizes people, the mindsets are again not going to change. So, actually you really need to have a balance at both ends.

Farah (F): Democracy, like, by definition, is for the people, by the people and is the people. But none of this happens in Pakistan. They just, it's, you know, it's handled, a few people have it in their hands. And for that – for mindsets to change, you need a lot more than that. Few people running the entire nation is not how you define democracy.

Komal (F): For democracy we need to counter the fact that everyone who comes to power becomes thirsty for power. No one wants to leave the seat, I would say. Musharraf has been there for ten years. Ayub Khan [another president who acquired power through a military coup in late 1950s] was there for ten years. See, the thing is we really need to give others a chance as well to come to power and see what they are going to do for the country rather than making one particular leader stay in power for so long. Because, obviously, the policies of the person may not be in the interest of the local people.

Naveed: So, this was basically a session about young people like you and talking to them and taking their views about recent international conflicts. So, I want your feedback. Was there anything important that I should have included – a question or a topic or an area?

Saeed (M): Media influence.

Others: Yes media influence.

Farah (F): That is a major factor.

Saeed (M): You can't change the mindsets of people without an unbiased media.

Naveed: Okay, I'll keep that in mind. Anything else?

Komal (F): I think US elections are very crucial for us as well. Because our elections do not count for that much as American elections. It's not about who rules in Islamabad as much as it is about who rules in the Oval office. So, that's more important. We need to make sure that we get the right link of how it is going to affect us, because the people who are running for the White House – all three of them, four of them – stated that they will draw in troops in Pakistan. Maybe not directly, but indirectly they do have that [unintelligible] so you do have that problem in the long run.

Naveed: Anything else I need to be taking up in a session like this in the future?

Farah (F): Economic issues as well.

Naveed: Like, for example?

Farah (F): Like history of the world, and how it is affecting oil, gold, you have, umm, the so called second economic recession in the US. It will probably affect everything else.

Naveed: Okay thank you very much for your time and thoughts.